

invest today for a  
**Safer Tomorrow**

A photograph showing silhouettes of four children and a bicycle against a vibrant sunset sky reflected in a body of water. In the background, there's a distant shoreline with some structures.

JULY - SEPTEMBER / 2009, #1

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Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

Regional conference on seismic safety

Response to risks in Central Asia



Dear readers,



According to the OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database the total number of people affected by natural disasters including floods, earthquakes, drought and extreme temperatures exceeded 8.3 million during the last two decades in Central Asia with over 2.7 thousand lives lost as a result of such events. Landslides, floods and drought are a continuous threat to the population. Besides, Central Asia is located in a highly seismic area prone to catastrophic earthquakes with the magnitude over 7. The history of the region knows a number of such events, one of which resulted in formation of the Lake Sarez - a major threat to the population living downstream. Deep-focus earthquakes originating in Hindu Kush may severely affect not only population in the epicentral zone (i.e. Afghanistan, Pakistan) but also the neighboring Central Asian countries. According to NGO Geohazard International (USA), there exists an approximately 40% probability that a large earthquake with the intensity up to 9 on the MSK-64 scale will hit the region in the coming 20 years. Without adequate preventive measures, an earthquake of this intensity may kill thousands of people and have a catastrophic long-term impact on the economy.

**Ms. Margareta Wahlstrom,**  
UN Assistant Secretary-General  
and Special Representative for  
Disaster Risk Reduction

We believe that regional developments and support is a decisive and important ingredient to trigger more action for the application of risk reduction measures and implementation of the Hyogo Framework.

The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat (UNISDR) serves as the focal point in the United Nations system for the coordination of disaster reduction and ensures synergies among disaster-reduction activities of the United Nations system and regional organizations and activities in the socio-economic and humanitarian fields.

UNISDR in Central Asia aims to enhance efforts of the Central Asian governments and other stakeholders in reducing the risks associated with the increased level of vulnerability and hazards. Based on its mandate, it will continue to function as a catalyst in developing the capacities of the region on disaster risk reduction and strengthening the ISDR system in the region through awareness raising and advocacy, policy support, promoting and facilitating partnerships and cooperation among various stakeholders and linking regional efforts with global initiatives.

The European Commission, through its Humanitarian Aid department, is a key donor to Disaster Risk Reduction in Central Asia. In its collaboration with the ISDR, it contributes to the implementation of the Hyogo framework for action through its DIPRECHO programme. It also works closely with the other major partners in this area.

With this publication, the UNISDR launches the regular issue of an Information Bulletin that will cover progress in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) in five countries of Central Asia. The bulleting will also provide information related to disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation from regional and global partners. Risk reduction is a relatively new concept for the broader public, and knowledge on how to reduce vulnerabilities and risk is still not widely and well known. Communication and knowledge sharing will eventually be a vital instrument to accelerate the process by enhancing public awareness and promote disaster risk reduction as a political priority.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wahlstrom".

Margareta Wahlstrom,

<sup>1</sup> Source: «EM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database ([www.emdat.be](http://www.emdat.be))

<sup>2</sup> «Strategies for Urban Earthquake Risk Management for the Central Asian Republics», Almaty, Kazakhstan, October 1996

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## European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) DIPECHO program



More than 300 million people all over the world suffer from disasters annually. The poor countries are in the most difficult situation. It is estimated that more than 97% of all the disaster victims are from the developing countries. Huge economic damages and material losses as a result of natural disasters deny these countries opportunities for sustainable development and poverty extermination.

Activities of the European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid in the field of disaster preparedness are implemented with the goal to establish and increase the communities' capacity to resist the disasters and to decrease the risk. It was for this purpose that the European Commission established the DIPECHO program in 1996. From 1996 till 2004 the DIPECHO program provided more than 78 million Euro to support 319 projects all over the world.

Initially the program was implemented in three regions - Central America, South-Eastern Asia and in Caribbean. In 1998 the decision was made to extend the program activities including two more regions - South Asia and the so called Andean Region. In 2003, Central Asia became the sixth region of DIPECHO program that contributed to development of the Fourth Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Central Asia region is exposed to considerable natural disaster risk. Such natural disasters and man-made accidents as earthquakes, landslides, droughts, floods and etc. cause substantial damage to economy, destroy important infrastructure and undermine the basis for further successful country development.

At the World Disaster Reduction Conference in Kobe (Japan) in 2005, four countries of Central Asia supported and signed the Hyogo Framework for Action, thus making a commitment to build the national capacities for disaster risk reduction, strengthening regional coordination and involving all sectors of the societies in this activity..

In compliance with the reports from DIPECHO Program, the projects on Disaster Risk Reduction in Central Asian countries (Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan) have been supported with the total amount of 15 000 000 Euro since 2003. The majority of the funds provided for Tajikistan, as the country requiring international assistance the most. The rest of the funds provided to support the most vulnerable regions in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan are less priority countries for DIPECHO program - Turkmenistan in view of inadequate information about the disaster risk reduction process, and Kazakhstan since economic situation in the country enables it to combat existing threats independently. Nevertheless, in 2005-2006 DIPECHO supported the project to improve the scientific relations

### DIPECHO V in Kyrgyzstan



UN Development Program within the framework of the fifth DIPECHO plan implements the project for Introduction of Natural Disaster Management in the process of decentralization in Kyrgyz Republic: «Improving emergency response capacity among the vulnerable population, local authorities and the partners».

The project is aimed at building sustainable disaster risk management capacity of local authorities in Kyrgyzstan (ayil okmotu) using the possibilities identified in the process of decentralization of the governmental management institutions. Considering this, the planned project activities include capacity building at the local level and development of important legislation at the national level.

The other partners including International Organization on Migration (IOM), "Save the Children", Agency on Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) and the National Red Crescent Association Republic of Kyrgyzstan were involved into the fifth DIPECHO Plan implementation.

and information sharing between universities and research institutes in the countries with support from UNISDR. Experts and specialists from Almaty (Kazakhstan) and Ashgabat (Turkmenistan) were involved into the project as the partners.

Evaluation of the three action plans within the DIPECHO program in Central Asia (conducted in June-July 2007) identified some positive outcomes. In particular it was noted that the projects contributed to raising awareness on existing risks among the communities, increasing their capacity and shaping a more systematic approach to address disaster preparedness and response problems. Training activities to establish local volunteer rescue teams and training on first medical aid that was provided within the DIPECHO program have already helped to save human lives. And small scale projects on preventive protection arrangements and establishment of the appropriate infrastructure (bank strengthening, mudflow conduits, retrofitting of buildings) assisted to secure the local communities and to be better prepared to natural disasters.

Within the fourth and the fifth DIPECHO plans correlating with the goals of Hyogo Framework for Action, hundreds of thousands of people in Central Asia were involved into various projects and programs on disaster risk reduction in the most vulnerable districts in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The DIPECHO program actively supported development of national disaster management systems within the region to ensure more effective integration of disaster risk reduction issues into the national development plans - from the construction regulations to the health sector. DIPECHO Program activities contributed to more active coordination and collaboration between the program partners as well as between the other interested parties. Today 16 partner organizations to the Fifth DIPECHO action plan are active in Central Asia. DIPECHO V in Central Asia was launched in July 2008 with the total budget of 7 mln USD. As of today the majority of the projects are already implemented.

Natural disasters often occur regardless of national frontiers. Therefore, it is essential to allow for such eventualities in disaster risk reduction strategies. Experience, knowledge and information exchange on the regional level contribute to optimization of the national strategies

## DIPECHO V in Tajikistan

In Tajikistan FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance implements the project on "Training of disaster resilient communities in remote mountainous areas" within the fifth DEPECHO Plan. The Project is aimed on increasing knowledge on disaster preparedness and development of capacity of the local communities and specialists. During project implementation the special attention was focused on risk evaluation and vulnerability, provision of training and collaboration with the relevant governmental agencies.

FOCUS is the partner to DIPECHO project implementation in GBAO since 2003 carrying out comprehensive initiatives on disaster risk reduction at community level in all districts of the Oblast. Within DIPECHO Project a hazard, vulnerability and risk assessment was conducted in 309 communities of the region, training in awareness raising and community disaster preparedness was organized in 268 communities, mitigation projects were implemented in 95 communities. Besides, more than 280 local specialists and about 390 governmental representatives were trained. Workshops were provided for 3,5 thousands of schoolchildren, youth and teachers. The CODAN radio communication systems were installed in 53 remote villages.



and plans on disaster risk reduction, resources mobilization and improve the management system and coordination.

DIPECHO partners (including the relevant governmental institutions in the region), repeatedly stressed the importance of continuing program implementation within the region and providing further assistance in disaster preparedness at the local, national and regional level. Currently DG ECHO in Central Asia is holding consultative meetings with various stakeholders to analyze and identify key priorities for DIPECHO VI Action Plan.

European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid focused on saving human lives and providing assistance to the most vulnerable groups. DIPECHO program activities on the disaster risk reduction are centered on people. The most effective outcomes within the disaster risk reduction and preparation can be reached only with participation of citizens, local communities, non-governmental and governmental organizations. The experience of DIPECHO Program implementation is a vivid illustration of the above.

# DIPECHO National conferences



DIPECHO Regional Conference  
Dushanbe, 2007

## DIPECHO National Conference in Kyrgyzstan

In May 2009, on the initiative of the DG ECHO office in Central Asia, ministry for emergencies of Kyrgyzstan and UNDP, a national conference of the fifth DIPECHO action plan partners was organized in Osh. Representatives of international and local nongovernmental organizations, research institutes, UN agencies and several universities participated at the conference.

The main goal of the conference was to discuss the priorities of the Fifth DIPECHO Action Plan and to determine the current gaps in the disaster risk reduction sector. The conference provided the participants an opportunity to discuss the most urgent problems in the field of disaster risk reduction, to find new approaches for close cooperation between governmental structures, civil society, international organizations and donor agencies in this field.

The National Conference allowed to determine the format and tendencies for engagement of stakeholders in the field of disaster management.

## DIPECHO National Conference in Kazakhstan

In September 2009, the National Conference on DIPECHO Program was conducted in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The event was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Emergencies, Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan, ECHO, regional UNISDR office, local nongovernmental organizations and the governmental agencies. During the conference, the issues of DIPECHO

program implementation in the Republic were considered. The participants discussed the Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy of the European Commission in the region and implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action in Central Asia. DIPECHO partners made presentations about the projects implemented under the support of DIPECHO program.

In working groups the participants developed the number of recommendations for more effective integration of disaster risk reduction issues into national and regional programs, and formulated a number of priorities to be included in the disaster risk reduction strategy for 2010-2011.

## DIPECHO National Conference in Turkmenistan

In September 22, 2009, the conference devoted to the implementation of the fifth DIPECHO program action plan in Turkmenistan was held in Ashgabat. The Head of the Regional DG ECHO office made a brief summary of the disaster risk reduction strategy of the European Commission. The representative of UNISDR in Central Asia told the participants about the activities of the regional office on implementation of the HFA priorities for action. A UNDP representative in Turkmenistan, in his turn, informed the participants about the activities in the field of climate change. The Chairperson of the National Red Crescent Society in Turkmenistan made a presentation on the activities implemented by the organization in 48 local communities that are the target group of the project within DIPECHO V framework.

The conference participants noted the importance of effective promotion of disaster preparedness issues through mass media, regular training, the new publications, organization of study tours to exchange experience in disaster risk management.

## Similar conferences were also conducted in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

DIPECHO conferences held in the republics of Central Asia marked an important step towards identification of the key goals and objectives for implementation of DIPECHO VI Action Plan which will be soon launched in the region. These and other important issues will be discussed during the second DIPECHO Regional Conference planned for November 2009.

# Invest today for a safer tomorrow

## The Second Session of the Global Platform on disaster risk reduction calls for halving disaster related deaths by 2015

The Second Session of the Global Platform devoted to the global progress in disaster risk reduction took place in Geneva, Switzerland in June 2009.

The Global Platform, attended this year by some 1,800 participants from more than 300 Governments and Organizations, is the premier gathering for the worldwide DRR community, including political leaders and their policy advisors, UN agencies, international organizations, and scientific/academic institutions. Delegates from almost 170 countries were brought together to discuss the priorities issues.

Global disaster statistics and trends are 'of grave concern' - last year, 236,000 people lost their lives in over 300 disasters - in earthquakes, floods, storms, landslides and other destructive events. More than 200 million people were directly affected, and damages exceeded 180 billion US dollars. Participants of the Second Session of the Global Platform called on national leaders to halve the number of deaths related to disasters by 2015.

The UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, John Holmes stressed in his speech, that «Achieving targets like these is challenging but it can be done. We are unable to stop disasters, but we can substantially reduce the losses from disasters and number of their victims. At present the scope of activities to reduce disaster risks is often simply too small and suffers from limited institutional capacities, lack of skills and established tools and small budgets. Putting it bluntly, many countries must dedicate more funds from national budgets - or suffer the consequences».

### Natural disasters and climate change

The Platform participants paid high attention to discussion of the impact of the climate change on the frequency and intensiveness of the occurring disasters. The overwhelming view of the Global Platform is that DRR must be a concrete part of the deal on climate change that will be sealed at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in December 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Human life tragedies are hidden behind the

figures about the greenhouse gas emissions. The data shows that 300 000 people die in the world annually as the direct consequence of the climate change. This indicator can rise up to half a million by 2030, this being the case, the majority of victims will be from developing countries. Disasters, caused by the climate change, pose a real threat to the daily life of millions of people. According to NASA the number of disasters and extreme weather phenomena are increasing constantly. Thus, in 1975 100, and in 2005 already 400 of them were registered.

Also, the results of recent studies of the National Centre for Atmospheric Research in Colorado show that the average annual number of strong hurricanes has doubled during the last century.

Disasters and climate change are closely interrelated. There is an exigency for integration of these key issues in the development and implementation of national, regional and international development programs and programs on adaptation to climate change. Relevant national bodies have to make significant efforts for harmonization of legislative and political frameworks and identify common and joint actions in the nearest future, in order to ensure broad coordination and comprehensive approach for dealing with disasters and climate change.

John Holmes, chairman to the second session of the Global Platform





Discussions in plenary sessions



### Financial issues

Hot discussions during the Platform touched upon issues of financial obligations. Within the global economic crisis, it is becoming more difficult for the governments to find funds, including for combating disasters. The funds, allocated by the UN special-purpose fund for programs on disasters is merely not sufficient, though, according to a number of experts, if countries increase their contribution, up to US \$25 billion can be accumulated annually.

Developing countries stated that they need additional support and financial assistance. Thus, for instance, in the official statement of the Republic of Tajikistan it is pointed out: «Having taken into account the impact of the global financial crisis, which has aggravated long-lasting problems, developing countries do not have an opportunity to achieve the goals of the above-mentioned programs within the remaining five years». The developing countries called on the UNISDR system to continue providing concrete and permanent support for ensuring sustainability and functioning of the established national platforms on disaster risk reduction.

Having discussed the issues related to financial obligations, John Holmes stated: «We need money for constructing shelter from hurricane. But, the governments and local communities can make a great number of things, which do not require huge financial investments. Include the subject of disaster risk reduction into the school curriculum is not the matter of money availability. Perhaps, some minor

expenses will be required for materials for teachers and for something else. But, this will not require major investment anyway. This is the matter of our awareness. If we do look at the creation of the early warning systems, perhaps some of them will be costly enough, but in general we are talking about such systems, which warn people about hazard, wherever they are - on a sea coast, in the field or somewhere else. And it is possible to use the most simple technology for this purpose. For instance, in Bangladesh, these are the volunteers on bicycles with megaphones. And we should say that this system has been very efficient there».

### Central Asia Consultative Meeting

At the second meeting of the UNISDR Global Platform, UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Activity (OCHA) and the International Federation of Red Cross in conjunction with official delegations of Central Asian countries conducted the Third Consultative Meeting on disaster risk reduction in the region.

The issues of establishment of regional coordination centre for preparation to disasters and disaster risk reduction, legislative frameworks for cooperation and establishment of national platforms were discussed at the meeting. Official representatives of countries agreed on signing all key documents necessary for establishment of regional coordination centre by the end of 2009.

UNISDR expressed its readiness to support the establishment of the Coordination Centre, which in the future could become the basis for establishment of the Regional Platform for disaster risk reduction. For this, consultative and expert support, as well as financial and material aid will be provided to countries. International donors agreed with this as early as during the consultative meeting, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan in April 2009.

Official delegations from Central Asian countries' also conducted bilateral and trilateral meetings with representatives of the UNISDR, World Bank, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and other organizations. The issues of the upcoming ECO conference, to be held in October 2009 in Tajikistan, implementation of the Disaster Risk Management Initiative in Caucasus and Central Asia and other issues were discussed during these meetings.

## Other events

Five high-level plenary sessions, five thematic round-tables and more than 40 other side-events were organized within the Global Platform.

The Government of Australia launched the policy framework for its new Investing in a Safer Future: A Disaster Risk Reduction policy for the Australian aid program. The goal is to reduce the vulnerability and enhance the resilience of countries and communities to disasters. The new aid program will also assist developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development in line with key government policy initiatives.

In his foreword to the policy document, Minister of Foreign Affairs Steven Smith states: «Investing in disaster risk reduction not only saves lives and livelihoods - it helps reduce the costs involved in responding to disasters, can offer a measure of protection to developing economies, and helps safeguard critical infrastructure.»

The world's four largest children's agencies (Plan International, UNICEF, Save the Children and World Vision) came together at the Platform where they jointly endorsed the statement that children are key to promoting change at household and local level. Furthermore, children must not only learn about DRR but must also be encouraged and expected to be involved in community level, local, national and global debates.

The representatives of these agencies concluded that although prioritizing education is a good investment, the best returns only appear when education is combined with programmes that support the active citizenship of young people.

Within the Global Platform there was a recording of a BBC World Debate, entitled Prevent or React. Four experienced panelists debated the issue, heatedly at times, in a one hour broadcast, recorded 'as live' in front of an audience of some 200 Platform participants who provided incisive interventions. The program was aired through the BBC World Service to a global audience of some 90 million people in July.

The UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, John Holmes announced the creation of a 'help desk'

arrangement for disaster risk reduction (DRR) to provide Governments with systematic access to information on organizations, networks, tools and the like needed to support their disaster risk reduction efforts. This system will be developed by the UNISDR and will involve ISDR partners as prime sources of information and support. The USG added that UNISDR is being asked to develop an upgraded strategy to quantify, to the extent possible, the nature and levels of investment in risk reduction.

## Specific targets

The UN's Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the nations to halve deaths related to disasters by 2015, when Hyogo Framework Program for Action will officially expire. Participants of the Global Platform identified specific targets as catalysts for cutting deaths and economic losses brought on by disasters. The main of them including:

- By 2010, establishment of clear national and international financial commitments to DRR, for example to allocate a minimum of 10% of all humanitarian and reconstruction funding, at least 1% of development funding, and at least 30% of climate change adaptation funding to disaster risk reduction.
- By 2011, a global structural evaluation of all schools and hospitals and by 2015 firm action plans for safer schools and





## First Session of the Global Platform

The first session of the Global Platform took place in Geneva in 2007. Official delegates, experts, scientists and representatives from international agencies and NGOs from over 120 countries participated in it. The first session of the Global Platform became a major global forum on disaster reduction after the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Kobe, Japan in January 2005 where the Hyogo Framework for Action - 10 years disaster risk reduction action plan was adopted.

The first session of the Global Platform will review the progress made in disaster risk reduction policies and implementation since the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action in Kobe, Japan in January 2005. The ten year plan was adopted by governments only weeks after the devastating tsunami in the Indian Ocean, to increase the resilience of nations and communities to disasters.

The urban risks and disaster risk reduction in megapoles became the main topic of the first session of the Global Platform. For the first time ever, the world's urban population will exceed its rural population and one third of the urban population will live in marginal settlements or in slums. Growing urbanization combined with climate change will create new stresses on urban settlements, making millions of people even more vulnerable to disasters.

Eight out of the ten most populated cities in the world are prone to earthquakes and six of them are vulnerable to storm surges, floods and tsunami waves. The recent reports made by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predict more weather related disasters in the future with over 200 million people facing the risk of coastal flooding in crowded cities like Cairo, Dhaka, Mumbai, New York and London.

Considering all of the above UNISDR has emphasized the importance of addressing the issue of urban safety at the highest level and giving it a greater priority in a global agenda. It was for this purpose that the World campaign on urban risk reduction for 2010-2011 was initiated by UNISDR.

hospitals developed and implemented in all disaster prone countries with disaster risk reduction included in all school curricula by the same year.

- By 2015, all major cities in disaster prone areas to include and enforce disasters risk reduction measures in their building and land use codes.

«There is no excuse for failing to act. Even now, some of the world's poorest countries are reducing the impact of disasters. What we need is the collective will to invest and act now,» - said John Holmes.

“We know how to move ahead. We can close the gaps and engage those who most need it. We can save lives, protect livelihoods, make our schools

and hospitals safe, and help address the climate change issue. With strong advocacy, and stronger commitment, greater public awareness and support, and appropriate funds, we can substantially reduce the losses from disasters, as well as contributing to resilient social and economic development” - noted in Chair’s Summary of the Second Session Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

At closing ceremony of the Global Platform, Margareta Wahlstrom, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, said: “It is clear that participants are leaving the Global Platform today with high expectations. The targets specified this morning are simply a first step - delivery must follow rapidly.”



# National Platforms in Central Asia

**Following the meeting of the Global Platform in Geneva, a number of workshops devoted to establishment and strengthening of National Platforms on disaster risk reduction were held in July in the Central Asia countries.**

Mechanisms of multilateral and intersectional coordination (National Platforms) were identified within Hyogo Framework for Action for 2005-2015 (HFA) as the major elements of the effective progress in the field of disaster risk reduction. Specifically, it has emphasized that “it is important to approve and implement the obligations at the national and local levels to save the lives and livelihoods threatened by natural disasters. The countries should develop or modify the policy, legislations and institutional agreements and also plans, programs and projects to integrate disaster risk reduction issues”.

Today excluding Kazakhstan, that has officially announced establishment of the National Platform in January 2008, the coordination mechanisms in other three countries of the region require improvement.

The main topic for discussion covered activities of the national coordination mechanisms on disaster risk reduction in the countries, extension of the scope of the National Platform activities, improvement of their management structure and strengthening relations with the international partners.

For the last several years, a gradual reformation of the present systems of emergency preparedness and response is observed practically in all republics of the region.

For instance, a strategic plan of the Ministry of Emergency Situations for 2010-2014 is being developed in Kazakhstan. Its provisions are in compliance with the priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the requirements of the National Platform of Kazakhstan on disaster risk reduction. The republic is on the threshold of

establishment of the unified hot line “112” that ensures emergency assistance to any victims.

In Tajikistan, the National Disaster Risk Management Strategy and the National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan are also under development. These strategic documents will form the basis to identify the priorities in the field of disaster risk reduction at the national and local level. Moreover, a multilateral partnership and coordination through REACT Group is implemented effectively in Tajikistan.

The Center for Management of Crises Situations under the Ministry of Emergency Situations has been functioning since 2006, in Kyrgyzstan. It is equipped with the satellite, radio and telecommunication equipment which makes it possible to obtain information from emergency sites in prompt manner and take the appropriate decisions to eliminate effectively emergency situations. The Ministry on Emergency Situations cooperates effectively with a number of international and local organizations. A special Emergency Response Coordination group functions in the republic and collaborates closely with the Interdepartmental Commission on Prevention and Liquidation of Emergency Situations.

National Platforms seminar  
in Astana, Kazakhstan



In Uzbekistan, steps have also been taken to improve the system of coordination and response to the emergency situations of the natural and man-made nature. Thus in 2007, the "Governmental Program on Forecasting and Prevention of Emergency Situations" was approved establishing a legislative basis to improve interdepartmental interactions and emergency management system. Uzbekistan officially presented the report on implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action in 2009.

Disaster Risk Reduction is rather the new approach for the region, however the government of the Central Asian countries expressed their interest in reviewing the existing disaster management system. For this purpose transformation of the national coordination mechanisms in National Platforms for disaster risk reduction will be required which will become the complex and multilateral tools for coordination and consultations. Involvement of extensive stakeholder community, in particular the civil society is an important aspect for mobilization of the current capacity for disaster risk reduction.

The participants of the conducted workshops identified the priority trends for consistent changes to be made in the present coordination mechanisms on disaster risk reduction. To approve the subsequent steps within this direction a special working groups will be established.

National Platforms seminar  
in Dushanbe, Tajikistan



Specifically, it is noted that "it is important to approve and implement the obligations on national and local level to save the lives and livelihoods endangered by disasters. The countries should develop or modify the policy, legislations and organization agreements, and also plans, programs and the projects with the aim to integrate the issues on disaster risk reduction".

Implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action in the Central Asia countries will be more purposeful, effective and efficient under the operation of the National Platforms on disaster risk reduction. Establishment of the national platforms should be adapted to the context of each country therefore it is important for UNISDR to continue provision of constant support to governments of the Central Asia countries to ensure sustainability and functioning of the established platforms.

"The planned National platforms will be established on the basis of the existing commissions or similar mechanisms already established in the four countries of Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan - as the national coordination mechanisms on disaster management; they are endorsed by the national legislatures as Governmental or Interdepartmental commissions on emergency situations. These bodies comprise a number of governmental organizations, ministries and agencies sometimes engaging participation civil society and academics as well" - said Goulsara Pusatova, Senior Advisor for the UNISDR sub-regional office for Central Asia.

This work is the part of DIPECHO V project (Strengthening disaster risk reduction capacity and implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action in Central Asia), implemented in Central Asia by UNISDR sub-regional office in Dushanbe, Tajikistan with the support from UNDP DRMP (Disaster Risk Management Program, UN Development Program) in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.



## **Recommendations of National Platforms to the Chair and participants of the second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**

**(Geneva, 16-19 June 2009)**

National Platform representatives gathered in Geneva during our global meeting on 15 June 2009, wish to convey the following recommendations to participants and the Chair of the second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction:

**Nations should:**

- Continue to expand their human and financial support to develop fully functional National Platforms as a means to support accelerated implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action at local, regional and national levels;
- Support the development of National Platforms as multi-stakeholder structures including private sector, NGO and civil society to
  - a. Facilitate the integration of disaster risk reduction in various sectors, as a contribution to achieve sustainable development in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (e.g. poverty reduction strategies);
  - b. Take into account specific vulnerabilities of social groups (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, etc.) in disaster risk reduction strategies;
  - c. Enhance the participation of gender-balanced and community-based organisations in disaster risk reduction.
- Use the capacities and lessons learned from National Platforms to develop coordination mechanisms and strategies for DRR at the local level;
- Facilitate and co-ordinate links between climate change adaptation focal points, and National Platforms for DRR, to avoid parallel mechanisms and to link existing expertise in order to reduce the human impact of climate change;
- Officially declare existing multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms as National platforms if approved by the country's government or self government and as requested by the Hyogo Framework for Action;
- Identify and appoint disaster risk reduction focal points in various key Government ministries, as the ministerial focal point persons are key in the coordination and implementation of disaster risk reduction activities at the ministerial portfolio level;
- Enhance information-sharing and exchange with other existing National Platforms through UN/ISDR facilitated networks and other National Platform channels;
- Promote capacity-development in DRR within National Platforms and develop common strategies through exchange of experiences with other countries on regional and international levels through information sharing and communication.

# Response to risks in Central Asia

International Coordination Meeting on risk assessment in Central Asia was held in Almaty on July 20-21, 2009. More than 80 representatives from 30 International and Regional Organizations (including UNDP, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UN European Economic Commission and other organizations), functioning in Central Asia participated in the meeting.

The meeting was organized within the frame of efforts for improvement of coordination and interaction between donors and international development agencies on water, energy and food security, whose decision is critically important for both support of sustainability in Central Asia and regional development in general. Another goal of the meeting was to discuss the existing gaps in the activities of international organizations and to draft a framework of action, which would serve for mobilization of resources and facilitate cooperation between UN agencies and other key partners.

Impact of the global financial crisis on the economy of Central Asian countries, expansion of regional cooperation for

jointly resolving the emerging crisis situations, new directions and strategy of the development organizations' activities were amongst the issues, considered at the meeting. Particular attention was paid to the situation in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, which are the most vulnerable countries with regard to the new threats.

Tajikistan experienced the «compound crisis» in winter of 2008, when unusually severe weather caused malfunctioning of the country's energy system, destroyed winter crops and led to the reduction of livestock numbers. The situation was also bad in the neighboring Kyrgyzstan. The crisis situation redoubled as the consequence of further increase in global prices of food, and spring and summer drought, which particularly struck the southern and eastern parts of Central Asia, as well as some parts of Fergana Valley and districts around the Aral Sea delta.

Neither the Government, nor international community was fully prepared for the crisis, which occurred in winter 2007-2008. The taken measures were not adequate in most of cases, which reflected the existing problems in the coordination of activities between the governments and national establishments, as well as between the governments and international community. «Risks related to global financial crisis compounded the water, energy and food risks. Significant devaluation of currency rate, caused by the decrease in export revenues and decrease in remittances from overseas, happened almost in all Central Asian countries. At present, already 1.5 million people in Tajikistan have been experiencing instability in food supply, 650 thousand people are faced with critical lack of food, and about one million residents of Kyrgyzstan have run into similar difficulties. Thus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan need further serious assistance from the international community in resolving both short term and long term development tasks», - Ben Slay, Chief Economist of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS countries, pointed out during the meeting.



Water and energy problems became one of the key points on the agenda. The general energy system and joint use of water in Central Asia collapsed together with the USSR. Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, which earlier provided their neighbors with energy, at present use fossil fuel at their own discretion, periodically increasing the tariffs for transit and export prices for Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In their turn, the latter countries, located at the upstream of the main rivers, use the hydroelectric power stations, inherited after the collapse of the USSR, as they see fit. Despite a number of intergovernmental agreements and efforts made for establishment of water and energy consortium in the region, there are still unresolved problems and disputed issues.

Yan Kubish, UN European Economic Commission Executive Secretary, said that in order to resolve the existing threats, it is necessary to develop regional cooperation more actively, since most of problems in Central Asian countries are of trans-boundary nature. As positive examples, Yan Kubish exemplified recent Summit of heads of countries - founders of the International Fund for Aral Sea, held in Almaty, at which Joint Statement about necessity for continuing cooperation for improvement of ecological and socio-economic situation in Aral Sea basin was adopted. He also referred to the Geneva Forum on discussion of radioactive wastes in the region, which outlined concrete ways of solution to this problem.

During a separate session, the meeting participants discussed the development of more effective integration between the disaster risk reduction, humanitarian assistance, primary rehabilitation and development of long-term development programs. The participants agreed that it is necessary to continue improvement of early warning mechanisms and other activities aimed at improvement of disaster preparedness. Here, strengthening links between response to water, energy and food threats, on one hand, and development and implementation of national programs and international initiatives on disaster risk



reduction, on the other hand, plays a significant role.

UNISDR photo

Establishment of a regional centre for emergency response and disaster risk reduction in Almaty, which is to be commissioned next year, can become the main stage for cooperation in combating disasters.

The experience of implementation of initiatives on poverty reduction, environment protection and comprehensive water resources management shows that due to the reduction of operation expenses and more effective dissemination of results, regional initiatives can serve as the basis for improvement of national level programs.

The Almaty meeting gave international partners a good opportunity to achieve closer mutual understanding and agreement on a wide range of issues and to develop a number of recommendations for further joint efforts for providing support to Central Asian countries. The participants also agreed about the following steps, which makes it possible to develop initiatives on management of the occurring risks and mitigation of negative impact on vulnerable regions and social groups.

# The Netherlands Red Cross

The Netherlands



Red Cross

The Netherlands Red Cross is a non-commercial organization which aims at prevention and mitigation of human sufferings and improving the situation of vulnerable groups. The Society helps, protects and provides care to the victims of war, conflicts and natural disasters as well as those who need help due to other circumstances. The organization was founded in 1867. The Netherlands Red Cross is part of the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

The efforts of the National Red Cross to prevent disasters in the Central Asia are viewed within the context of policy and strategy adopted by the Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Since 1992 the Netherlands Red Cross is maintaining close cooperation with the National Red Crescent Societies of Central Asia in the following areas: emergency preparedness and response, first aid, support to youth and capacity building. Since 2000 particular attention has been paid to the programs of development and approaches oriented towards the population. During the last couple of years the NRC jointly with the local national societies of the Red Crescent has been implementing programs financed by DIPECHO in Central Asia.

Within the frame of DIPECHO V Action Plan the National Society of the Red Cross and Red Crescent implemented the program "Capacity building of communities and schools in preparedness and response to emergencies in Central Asia". In addition

to Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken regions of Kyrgyzstan, the program also covered other countries of Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in their respective regions which are the most exposed to the risks of emergencies. The number of direct beneficiaries was 972 656. These can be broken down into the following target groups:

- the population exposed to earthquakes, landslides, floods and mudflows;
- schoolchildren (aged 7 - 17) and school teachers;

- public from the vulnerable communities and cities;
- staff and volunteers of governmental agencies, NGOs and international organizations involved in disaster risk reduction.

The program targeted 248 local emergency committees and 476 schools.

The overall objective of the program was to support the strategies increasing the capacity of local population and institutes in timely response to disasters. This resulted in better sustainability and lesser vulnerability.

The key results of the program were the following major achievements:

1. Local preparedness to emergencies, possibility to respond, the systems of vulnerable local population in the most exposed areas in all countries of Central Asia are strengthened and scaled.
  2. Schools implemented their capacity in the development of "culture of prevention" by exercising the changed attitude and practice.
  3. Population which is exposed to risks is informed on a wide scale of risk reduction tools which can be applied in their daily life.
  4. Preparedness to emergencies and possibility to respond among all five national Red Crescent societies are improved.
  5. Enhanced capacity of regional cooperation between five national Red Crescent societies in disaster risk reduction.
  6. Risk of local emergencies is reduced by way of mobilization of the population and mitigating activities.
- 248 local emergency committees which were the beneficiaries of the program, increased their capacity through the development of action plans and risk maps for relevant population groups, acquiring knowledge and skills in disaster



management and first aid as well as provision of necessary equipment and tools for the disaster response. Teachers and schoolchildren of 476 schools acquired knowledge and skills in disaster management and first aid as well as shared their knowledge with their families, neighbors and friends.

Eight small scale structural projects were implemented in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan by the population; these projects assisted in reducing local emergency risks.

## To protect safety of children

UNICEF with support of Department of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) within DIPECO V program, implements the project <<Supporting disaster risk reduction amongst vulnerable communities in Central Asia>>. Three Central Asian countries participate in it - Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The key aim of the project is to provide safety to children and to protect them from natural hazards.

Main UNICEF partners are Ministries and Committees on emergency situations, Ministries of Education, UNISDR, National Societies of Red Cross and Red Crescent and Netherlands Red Cross. Representatives of school administrations became the target group of the project, as well as school teachers, schoolchildren and local governments.

One of the strategic tasks of the project is to integrate DRR into existing national school curriculums.

In all three countries where the project was carried out, special attention was given to specific natural hazards and risks that the country is prone to, such as earthquakes, floods, mudflows and landslides. To reduce consequences of these emergency situations and to reduce vulnerability of local communities, UNICEF aims to reach close to 380,000 schoolchildren and their teachers in the region with basic awareness raising information and materials.

During the project UNICEF developed a variety of publications on preparedness to natural disasters, booklets, posters, brochures, board-games. In close cooperation with experts of Ministries of Emergencies and Committees for Emergencies and local governments, school preparedness plans were developed, in

selected schools of region risk mapping, school emergency brigades to respond to emergencies were set up. For consolidating received skills and training of school staff on how to use medical and other rescue equipment, the demonstration training and emergency drills were organized.

In Kazakhstan, for example, more than 2000 teachers and 50 000 schoolchildren were reached with relevant information and materials providing them with knowledge and skills on preparedness to emergency situations.

<<For us it was important to teach the children correct behavior prior, during and after ES. During the project we showed how it is possible to protect themselves, their families in times of disasters with available resources and measures.>>, - said the head of UNICEF representation in Almaty - Raimbek Sissemaiev.

In Kazakhstan, UNICEF actively co-operates with state authorities, including the Ministry of Emergencies and the Ministry of Education to work out new approaches and criteria which would promote creation of conditions for effective and safe environment for children in Kazakhstan.

One more important component of the project was the initiative «Examples of good practices and tools on DRR in education in Central Asia», organized jointly with UNISDR.

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# Regional Conference on Seismic Risk Reduction

## Background

Hait catastrophe belongs to the category of the largest earthquakes in the last century. More than 29,000 people died and 150 villages disappeared as the consequence of the earthquake. One hundred and forty five kolkhozes (collective farms) were destroyed, 12,647 houses were destroyed completely and 4,668 houses suffered partial damages; 229 buildings of state authorities, 92 schools, 4 boarding houses and 7 hospitals were also partly destroyed. Nine thousand five hundred cattle and 80,000 small cattle died. It caused a huge damage to the country, economy whereof only just recovering after the World War II. A group of 20 surgeons with instruments and medicines and a group of workers of the Central Administration, led by A. Titova, Inspector of the Central Committee of the All-Russia Communist Party (of Bolsheviks), Rogozin, Member of the Board of USSR Ministry of Health, and Stakhanov, Head of Department for Border Protection, went to the area under the instruction of the USSR Council of Ministers on July 11, 1949. General Kurbatkin, Turkestan Military Area Commander, flied to the catastrophe area. They established Headquarters and Governmental Commission for the study and liquidation of earthquake consequences. They sent material resources out of the central reserves to the country, and mobilized sanitation aviation of all Central Asian countries for taking the victims out to capital civil and military hospitals. A special commission, led by K.E. Voroshilov, visited the

catastrophe area on July 25-26, 1949, and B. Gafurov and M. Shogadaev, leaders of the country, visited the disaster zone on July 28.

Hait earthquake, which resulted in enormous human casualties and changed relief, attracted a particular attention of the Central Government and local authorities emphasizing the need of studying earthquakes. The best scholars of the USSR Academy of Science and the USSR State Construction Organization were sent to seismically active areas in order to study earthquakes and train professionals for future scientific and research institutes of seismology, geology, and anti-seismic construction.

## Seismic activity during recent years

The last decades are determined by a notable increase in seismic activity at the global level. Recent catastrophes in Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, China, Pakistan, and in a number of other countries, as well as sensible earthquakes that had occurred in Central Asian Region during the last several years evoked serious concern.

According to experts, there is a high risk of a devastating earthquake in one of Central Asian countries in the near future. Average return period of catastrophic earthquakes in Central Asia, and particularly in Tajikistan is between 80-130 years. In some areas of the country where larger seismic phenomena occurred in the past, this period has already came up. At present, the situation in big cities and densely populated areas of the regions is mostly hazardous.

All of the well-known earthquakes in mountainous countries have secondary consequences - hazardous exogenous geological processes (landslides, mudslides, mud and debris flows), which are the major hazard for population taking into account the lack of areas suitable for resettlement. The devastating Karatag (1907), Sarez (1911), Hait (1949), Fayzabad (1943) and a comparatively weak Hissar (1989) earthquake can serve as a dramatic example in Tajikistan. Unique materials are accumulated in the

**Khait in our days.**  
Photo: A. Ischuk



region, which require thorough analysis with the use of modern technology and with the involvement of international experts. The results should become the property of the world scientific community.

### Conference in Dushanbe

Regional Conference on Seismic Risk Reduction, dedicated to the 60th anniversary of Hait Earthquake, held on July 9-11, 2009 in Dushanbe (Tajikistan), gathered representatives from governments of Central Asian countries, as well as experts and representatives from ECO member-countries (and particularly Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan), Armenia, Germany, Georgia, Russian Federation, and Switzerland. The participants also included representatives from the World Bank, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Turkish International Cooperation Agency, International Commission on Large Dams, InWent, UNDP, Humanitarian Organizations and NGOs.

Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan and UNISDR Regional Office in Central Asia were the main organizers of the Conference.

Local and international experts discussed the existing problems on seismic risk



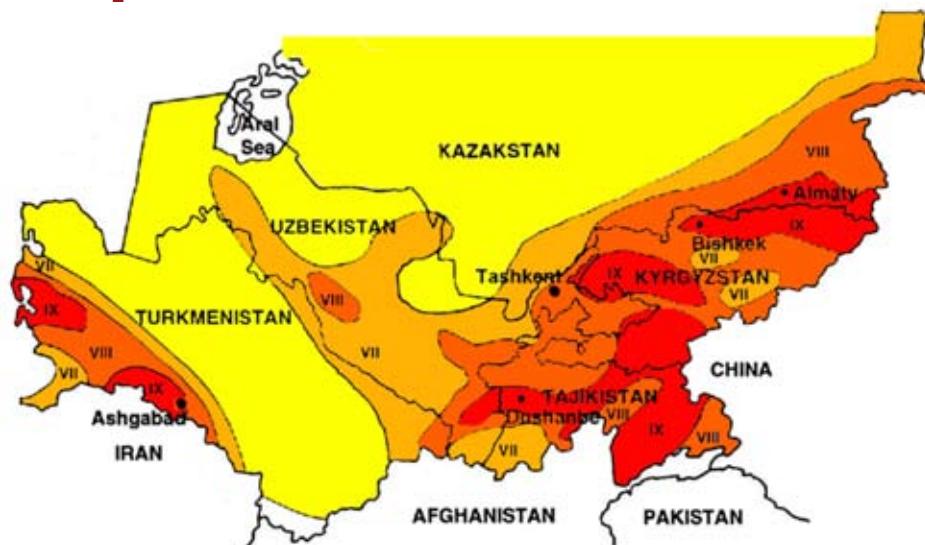
assessment and reduction in Central Asia and provided their proposals on the basis of the existing successful experience and broad cooperation between the national, regional and international organizations.

« It is not only experts and representatives from Governments of Central Asian countries that gathered today for a round table discussion, - Goulsara Pulatova, UNISDR Regional Office Senior Advisor in Central Asia, says. - At present, this issue is so important that prominent seismologists, city planners, geologists and heads of state services on emergency and civil defense from Caucasus, Europe and representatives from International Organizations expressed their wish to participate in this event».

Participants of the regional conference in Dushanbe

The participants discussed the issues of regional cooperation on seismic risk reduction, potential joint projects and programs, which should promote improvement of seismic safety in Central Asia and Caucasus. Thus, Gektor Babayan from the Institute of Geological Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, having reminded the participants about the devastating Spitak earthquake which occurred on December 7, 1988 in the northern part of Armenia pointed out: “Lessons from Spitak earthquake, the whole difficult process of rehabilitation of the consequences whereof did not finish yet, once again proved the necessity and importance of conducting international interdisciplinary research programs, establishing networks for monitoring of geological hazards and risks for the creation of comprehensive regional databases and ensuring free access to them, improving models of forecasting disasters».





Seismic Risk Map, Central Asia

He called for having closer and more efficient “cooperation and interrelation between the scholars and local authorities, and decision makers on emergency cases”.

### Common opinion

The participants of the meeting agreed that further strong earthquakes in Central Asia might have catastrophic social and economic consequences. It is extremely important to ensure free access to data for all of the Central Asian countries, to establish a single system of data processing at all seismic centres of the Region and ensure access of all regional and national seismic centres to high speed Internet connection. It is also important to organize training of seismologists on the use of system of processing and analysis of seismic data.

### Conference participants recommend that

The Governments of Central Asian countries

- improve their system of training and preparing population in all regions on earthquakes and liquidation of the consequences of earthquakes, on behavior during emergency cases, caused by earthquakes
- Involve scholars and specialists in development of user-friendly visual aids, booklets, brochures on hazardous disasters, on preparation for them and their prevention and liquidation of consequences.
- Enforce standards and rules of anti-seismic construction
- Improve their national legislations

on designing, construction and use of buildings and premises;

- Introduce and improve the system of compulsory insurance of buildings and premises.

«Ensuring seismic safety of urban areas is one of the most difficult tasks of seismology and anti-seismic construction», - pointed out academician Sabit Negmatullaev. - «It is particularly relevant for our region, the territory of which belongs to pretty active seismic parts of the Earth». Having pointed out that seismic safety of populated areas and objects mainly depends on the technical condition of buildings and premises, S. Negmatullaev shared his experience in development of a specialized GIS (geographic information system) - technology for the assessment of consequences of earthquakes on the territory of Dushanbe city. «We have implemented large volume of activities in three main directions, in order to settle our task - the Tajik scholar said. - This is identification of the primary patterns of seismicity for assessment of the level of potential seismic hazard in Dushanbe city area; Inventory and assessment of the technical condition of multistory living blocks and development of earthquake scenarios with different parameters from different seismogenic zones threatening the capital city and their consequences».

### Addressing the United Nation and Donor Community

It is important to draw the attention of the world community on the high seismic hazard in Central Asian countries; to provide possible assistance in the development and introduction of special GIS-technology for the immediate assessment of the consequences of strong earthquakes and taking efficient measures for their reduction in the region; to provide technical and scientific-methodic assistance in the development of scenarios of strong earthquakes and assessment of potential loss for big and capital cities with the purpose of seismic risk reduction; to provide technical and scientific-methodological assistance in re-establishment and organization of a survey for seismological and geodynamic monitoring through support and installation of a modern seismic monitoring system in Central Asian region, to recommend donors to coordinate their activities and support projects and programs in this sphere.

## Conference participants agreed

The participants of the Regional Conference on seismic risk reduction, dedicated to the 60th anniversary of Hait earthquake (1949) agreed on the following:

- to conduct a conference, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Kemin earthquake in Kyrgyz Republic in January 2011;
- to develop Ethics Code of earthquakes forecasting for Central Asian countries, to establish a single catalogue of earthquakes in CA (since 2005), to issue operational regional seismological bulletin of CA;
- CA countries should adopt Laws on seismic safety and Programs on seismic safety at the national level.

The meeting participants called for establishment of training programs on technology of strengthening of buildings in seismic areas, including preparation of training films, active use of the existing national scientific and educational computer networks of NATO-Silk Road.

The conference gathered different stakeholders and gave them the

opportunity for exchanging ideas, opinions regarding the existing situation in disaster risk reduction in the region, for discussing the existing challenges and ways of their solution, examples of successful experience and obtained knowledge.

Shahodat Saibnazarova .

Michael Jones,  
UN Resident Coordinator  
in Tajikistan



### Conference Participants recommend that The Governments of Central Asian countries

- improve the system of training to teach the inhabitants of all regions of the country in proper ways of conduct during emergencies caused by an earthquake and in the follow-up to such emergencies;
- enlist cooperation of scientists and other specialists, and entrust them with making visual aids, booklets or brochures on disasters, disaster preparedness, their prevention and mitigation, written in nontechnical and easily understandable language;
- assist organizations involved in training of the population in how to behave in emergencies caused by severe earthquakes on the basis of corresponding projects;
- support research aimed at earthquake forecast and reduction of social and economic damage and other similar research conducted with application of GIS technologies;
- speed up work aimed at the exchange of seismological data in Central Asian region in order to reduce the risk of potential local and trans-boundary earthquakes;
- speed up work aimed at the exchange of seismological data both in Central Asian region and with international centers giving the priority to the data exchange in an on-line mode in order to ensure operative control of the seismic situation and timely warning of the emergency structures;
- ensure regular funding of activities to promote certification aimed at determining the degree of earthquake resistance of existing buildings and structures, or their vulnerability, as the case may be, and reducing the response of the most vulnerable ones;
- promote rehabilitation of the engineering and seismometric services;
- carry out proper control over observance of norms and rules of earthquake-proof construction, improve the republican normative basis regulating design, construction and maintenance of buildings and structures;
- assist international organizations in carrying out various projects and programs aimed at the safety of the population, evaluation and reduction of seismic risk for the benefit of various areas and capital cities of the region;
- introduce and develop the system of obligatory insurance of buildings and structures;
- develop integrated policy on trans-boundary exchange of information related to disasters (including climate change);
- support establishment of the regional networks of the information exchange.

N.N. Mikhailova, S.H. Negmatullaev

# About regional cooperation on seismic monitoring in Central Asia

At the beginning of 1990's, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, negative phenomena, which negatively affected seismology, occurred in the region. The number of seismic stations decreased rapidly since the centralized funding of practical and methodological geophysical expeditions stopped. Funding of seismologic institutes was reduced. Central Asian Centre for forecasting of earthquakes in Dushanbe stopped functioning. No uniform systemic coordination of seismic observations and data processing was available any longer. Issuing of the operational seismic bulletins of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (previously published for over a decade) was suspended, data exchange at different operational levels stopped. The consistent approaches and methods, which existed up to that time, changed.

Consequences of these changes have not been overcome yet. On the other hand, introduction of new digital methods of recording of seismologic observations started now. Some individual countries started cooperating with global observational networks, and integrating into the International Data Centre. This created new prospects for the analysis of

data in order to resolve the very different geodynamic tasks.

Establishment of digital networks required new approaches for data processing, their storage and exchange. Everybody understood clearly that it was necessary to boost joint efforts aimed at organization of seismological data exchange in the Central Asian region to reduce the risk of possible local and trans-boundary earthquakes.

It is necessary to create a regional computer network and unified network of reference digital seismic stations in Central Asia for the establishment of the basis of such an exchange. Especially, the region's problems became particularly prominent in the process of implementation of activities within the Project of International Scientific and Technical Centre KP - 1176 on seismic risk management in Central Asia. One of the tasks of the project was to create seismologic database in Central Asia by 2005. Data Centre of the Institute for geophysical researches of the National Nuclear Centre of the Republic of Kazakhstan was responsible for the coordination of these activities. Significant discrepancy in the level of contemporary seismic observations between the countries was identified, and also fragmentation of the observation networks, major challenges in entering different information into a single database as the result of different formats, different approaches and so on were identified.

In Tajikistan, a unique system of seismological and geophysical observations, established by the Institute of Physics of the Earth of the USSR Academy of Sciences and Institute of earthquake engineering and seismology (TIEES), which mostly suffered from the civil war, in fact was put out of action. A network consisting of seven broadband seismic stations with satellite communication of the firm "Nanometrics" was created with the assistance and support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for the rehabilitation of the seismic monitoring system.

A delegation from USSR's AS led by A.N Alexandrov is introduced to TIEES system



The created system served as the basis for the establishment of the Geophysical Survey (GS) under the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan, the main task of which is to conduct regular seismologic, geodynamic, geodetic and other types of observations in the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan, and immediately provide all interested organizations with seismologic information about earthquakes, occurring within the country and neighboring states.

Besides, since the Central Asian territory was declared a nuclear-free zone, the GS should participate in activities related to monitoring of nuclear testing sites of neighboring countries and immediately inform relevant bodies about the conducted tests for timely radiation monitoring.

The first step for establishment of coordination in the exchange of seismological data in Central Asia was made in April 2009 in Almaty. A working seminar with participation of 11 organizations from 7 countries, including the most qualified seismologists from Kazakhtsan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan was conducted at the Kazakhstan National Data Centre by the initiative and with the participation of Tim Ahern, IRIS Consortium Program Manager (USA).

As a result, the meeting participants decided to make joint efforts aimed at establishment of a regional centre for information exchange in Central Asia. They proposed to use the established unified regional network of reference stations of seismic observation, started by GTZ Trans-boundary Project (Germany), as well as partners of Central Asian countries from Norway, Switzerland, USA, Japan, and China.

Decisions and recommendations of the Regional Conference on Seismic Risk Reduction, dedicated to the 60th anniversary of Hait earthquake, held under the initiative of the UNISRD Central Asia in Dushanbe on July 9-11, 2009 are of great significance for the regional cooperation on seismic monitoring in Central Asia. The Conference asked the UN and other international organizations and donor community to provide technical, and scientific and methodological assistance in rehabilitating and establishing seismological and geodynamic monitoring service through supporting and installing modern system of seismic monitoring in Central Asian region.



Modern digital broadband seismic station with satellite connection

**Alongside with establishment of the digital seismic stations network, the following is needed for the implementation of these recommendations:**

1. Free access of Central Asian countries to data.
2. Uniform data processing system in all centres.
3. Provide the data centres of each country with high speed internet connection.
4. Conduct training workshops for the staff of Central Asian organizations on the use of processing system and other related scientific issues.
5. Exchange of staff between countries, including young specialists to promote communication between scientists of Central Asia and Europe, USA and other countries.
6. Transfer the historic analogue seismic datasets into a uniform digital seismic format.
7. Organize issuing of an operative regional Central Asian seismic bulletin.

Implementation of these recommendations will make it possible to reestablish regional seismic monitoring and cooperation of seismologists of Central Asia for a single noble goal - seismic risk reduction in such a seismically hazardous area of the world at a new level.



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## UN: disaster risk index for 200 countries of the world is published

As compared to the rest of the world, Bangladesh and China residents are running the highest risk of death because of earthquakes, floods, cyclones and mudflows.

These are the results of researches, conducted by UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR). The disaster risk index, derived by the UN, was published on the eve of the opening of the Global Platform on disaster risk reduction - international conference, which was held in June of this year in Geneva.

Margareta Wahlstrom, UN Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, pointed out that no

country in the world is safe from disasters. In the countries, which earlier were subject to a minimum risk, due to the climate change the situation may change totally in the future, Ms. Wahlstrom added.

UN specialists took into account different factors while developing the index. For instance, the rate of population growth in a country, probability of a disaster occurring there, as well as preparedness of the government to combat disasters were taken into account in order to identify the hazard of earthquakes for residents of this or that country.

Residents of Bangladesh, China, India and Indonesia turned out

to be the most vulnerable to disasters according to all available indicators. Columbia, Myanmar and Pakistan are in the second place followed by Afghanistan, Algeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guatemala, Iran, Japan, Peru, Philippines, Romania and Uzbekistan. And Denmark, Estonia, Greenland, Latvia, Qatar, Seychelles Islands and United Arab Emirates turned out to be the safest countries from the disaster point of view. Altogether, specialists analyzed the situation in 200 countries of the world.

Source: [www.c-news.ru](http://www.c-news.ru)

## 300 thousand people die from disasters related to climate change annually

Nongovernmental scientific and research institute of "Global Humanitarian Forum", led by Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General, thinks that about 300 thousand people die as the consequence of disasters related to climate change annually.

Global Humanitarian Forum also assumes that the global warming has had a negative impact on 325 million people and annually leads to economic loss, amounting US \$125 billion. Kofi Annan pointed out that residents of the poorest countries suffer from the climate change more than other people do.

It has been established that particularly climate change caused by human activities is the reason of the growth of the global mortality from malnutrition, gastrointestinal disturbance, malaria and troubles related to heat. A number of competent scholars criticized the report.

Roger Pilk Junior, Political Scientist and Catastrophe Studies Specialist from Colorado University in Boulder (USA), called the report "methodological misunderstanding". According to him, there is no way of comparing the loss related to the global



warming against the biggest losses as the result of the growth of population and development of new territories. At the same time, the scholar recognizes that the climate change is an important problem, which requires the most intent attention.

Economist Jeffrey Sachs, one of the twelve experts, who reviewed the report by the request of the "Forum", acknowledged that some conclusions were simplified. However, according to him, the report deserves the most intent attention. Inhabitants of Africa, Middle East and South Asia have

already been experiencing the most negative consequences of the global warming.

Soren Peter Andreasen, Social Scientist of the Consulting Company of Dalberg Global Development Advisers, who supervised the process of drafting the report, explained that the report provides an approximate assessment. The document is aimed at the heads of states, who will come together in Copenhagen in December to discuss the problems of global warming and greenhouse gas emissions.

Source: [complenta.ru](http://complenta.ru)

## 200 Million people projected to become environmental migrants by 2050

17 June 2009 - «we must reconsider our agricultural practices and how we manage our water resources» - said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, marking the World Day to Combat Desertification.

During the recent 17th session of UN Commission on sustainable development, it was stressed that desertification and land degradation processes are global challenges which demand comprehensive solutions.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appeals to recognize the real threat of uncontrolled desertification expansion.

One-third of the Earth's surface is affected by desertification, endangering the livelihoods and development of up to 1 billion people.

Faced with long periods of drought, famine and deepening poverty, many have only one option: flight from their land. There are already 24 million people forced by land degradation to leave their homes. 200 million people projected to become environmental migrants by 2050.



PHOTO: NOZIM QALANDAROV

One-third of the world's cropland was abandoned in the past four decades. Continued desertification negatively influences around three fourth of the world's grassland. Climate change is one force behind desertification. Others are unsustainable agricultural practices and poor water resources management, with agriculture and livestock husbandry accounting for

70 per cent of fresh water use and up to 80 per cent of deforestation. Mr. Ban Mi-Moon said in a message to commemorate the Day that activities aimed to slow down global warming will help countries to fight continued desertification, raise agriculture productivity, de-escalate the poverty and contribute to the global security.

## UNISDR calls on leaders of the world's eight main industrialized countries to take forward the global DRR

Board of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction send to leaders of the world's eight main industrialized countries gathering for a G8 Summit in L'Aquila, Italy, a special statement, urging them to apply their considerable influence, resources and political will to advance major action points on disaster risk reduction. Statement has a particular importance against the background of the place where Summit took place - L'Aquila was devastated by a fearsome earthquake in April this year.

G8 leaders and their governments are 'uniquely placed to establish, support and implement nationally owned disaster risk reduction plans and help address the risks

associated with climate change. They also must develop resilience to future hazards and make a lifesaving difference to the millions who are at risk.

<<Helping disaster-prone countries in incorporating disaster risk reduction in their national strategic initiatives and development plans. DRR has also been integrated in all programs of donors and international development agencies ensuring the research needed at all levels to develop, disseminate and apply climate forecast information, early warning systems and ecosystem essentials enabling expeditiously a global structural and functional assessment of all schools and hospitals, coupled with firm

action plans for safer health and education facilities developed and implemented in all disaster-prone countries>> - noted in the statement.

ISDR appealed to leaders of the world's countries who participated in G8 to make unequivocal financial commitments to disaster risk reduction, for example to allocate a minimum of 10% of all humanitarian and reconstruction funding, at least 1% of development funding, and a sizeable portion of climate change adaptation funding to disaster risk reduction.

Source: **UNISDR**

# The Head of UN calls on states to invest in projects for mitigation of natural disasters

Last year 236,000 people were killed by earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, floods, tropical storms, droughts and other natural calamities. About 300 large-scale natural disasters took place on the planet in 2008. The lives of about 200 million people were affected to different extent.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon outlined these figures at the presentation of the new UN report on mitigation of natural disasters in Bahrain. The 200-page research contains data on the natural disasters in the last 32 years - in the period from 1975 through 2007.

The Head of UN stated that while it is impossible to prevent rainstorms and earthquakes the mankind can still reduce the extent of their destructive impact. In this connection he called upon the states to invest in development of new mechanisms of adaptation to the

modern realities influenced by the global warming.

The UN Secretary General stated that such investment can help saving human lives, and will facilitate the struggle against poverty in the developing countries that are most vulnerable to the hazards. Especially grave situation is with the poor island states.

Ban Ki-moon reminded that at the international conference in Kobe, Japan, in 2005, the Hyogo Framework for Action for 2005-2015 was adopted, that contains recommendations for mitigation of natural disasters. Among other recommendations, the states prone to disasters are suggested to give up construction of unstable buildings and their location in the most dangerous places.

The Head of UN noted the significant progress achieved lately in ensuring

early warning of the possible natural calamities and in implementation of programs of preparedness for disasters. However, a lot is yet to be accomplished in this regard.

Ban Ki-moon drew the attention of the states to the action plan of twenty points, described in the report. The plan provides concrete recommendations for mitigation of impact of natural disasters, including those related to improvement of planning of construction of housing and upgrading the quality of construction.



## Not all the countries can smoothly adapt to climate change effects

European and Central Asian countries have faced serious effects of climate change. Many countries of the region are unable to adapt smoothly to the new climatic challenges. This concern is contained in the World Bank report on Climate Change Adaptation in Europe and Central Asia. The report emphasizes that "inadequate environmental protection in the past and unreasonably outsized infrastructure in countries outside the European Union are fraught with hazardous consequences. These countries become painfully vulnerable to the impact of even slight climate change."

The report says that contrary to the common perceptions the region has already encountered the effects of climate change. From the beginning of the 20th century, average temperatures have already risen

by 0.5°C in the South and by 1.6 °C in the North (Siberia) whereas by mid-21st century the temperature is expected to rise by 1.6-2.6 °C. It is anticipated that the temperature change in the North will be more pronounced in winter months.

"The temperature rise manifests itself through increased pace of melting glaciers and decreased volume of snowfall in winter months. A great many countries already suffer the consequences of floods in wintertime and droughts in summer, while South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia face a severe shortage of water resources" - indicated Marianne Fay co-director of the World Development Report 2010 on climate change.

"It has been repeatedly noted that the expected climate warming and abundant precipitation in North-

Eastern Europe and Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine - will be conducive to expansion of agricultural production. However, all these possible prospects pale against the background of high production costs and poor productivity rates in the regions" - stressed the World Bank representative. She also added that while in the rest of the world the yield capacity of grains has been rising on the average by 1.5% annually, in those three countries, it either dropped or stayed at the same level.

The World Bank experts believe that in the coming 10-20 years Europe and Central Asia can build their capacity to withstand the influence of climatic impacts and should definitely do so through improvement of their infrastructure and environmental protection systems.

## World Humanitarian Day

19th of August 2009 became the first World Humanitarian Day. The Day was established in December 2008 by the United Nations General Assembly to honor all humanitarian and the United Nations and associated personnel who have lost their lives in the cause of duty and those who have worked in the promotion of the humanitarian cause.

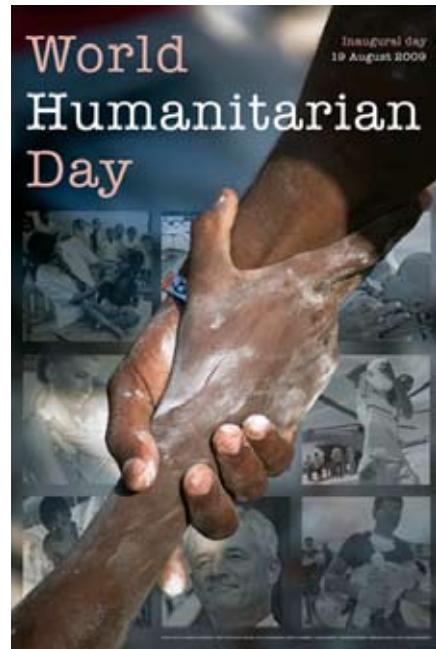
Furthermore, World Humanitarian Day focuses on acknowledging the ongoing work of humanitarian staff around the globe and aims to draw attention to humanitarian needs worldwide.

Exactly six years ago on 19 August, 2003, the United Nations Office in Iraq was bombed and 22 people

lost their lives. Among them was Sergio Vieira de Mello, at that time the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Iraq. While there have been many other fatal incidents involving humanitarian personnel the General Assembly decided to use the anniversary of this incident as World Humanitarian Day.

The Day will be marked around the world with events, concerts and commemorations to increase the public understanding of humanitarian assistance activities.

Source - World Humanitarian Day leaflet



## Head of the UN called for the establishment of a new architecture of versatility, which allows the humankind move back from the razor-edge

The future generations will probably remember 2009 as the critical year. It marked the end of the period of the universal optimism and euphoria, which had lasted for several decades, and the beginning of a new era of soberness and realism in national and international affairs. This is stated in the annual address of the UN Secretary General about the Organization's activity. It will be discussed at the upcoming 64th session of the General Assembly.

«The economic crisis was felt in every corner of the planet last year, which caused devastating consequences for the most vulnerable peoples and countries. The continuing crisis of the lack of food has been destroying the lives of families and whole communities, and at present more than one billion people go to bed hungry every day. Pandemic of Influenza A (H1N1) – the first pandemic of influenza within more than 40 years - reminded us that our most valuable property - our health - depends on the health of everybody on the planet», – pointed out the report of the Head of the UN.

It highlights that climate crisis has also been growing in the background

of all these disturbances. Scholars warn that the changes affecting the planet have been taking place faster, and the consequences of these changes are more severe than it was forecasted only one or two years ago.

«We are at the razor-edge. And nevertheless, we cannot lose composure and let our people lose their confidence in themselves due to these crises», – the report pointed out . Ban Ki-moon highlighted that it is possible to find a way of resolving the current situation only through establishment of a new architecture of versatility, which will meet the interests of all categories of population throughout the world.

Head of the UN stated that during the last two and a half years the Organization and its member countries started transformations, which will have a decisive significance for identification of the nature of versatility in the new century.

«The UN can and should become the centre for new versatility. It should provide a platform for reconciling the competing interests and opinions on how we have to

resolve the problems, faced by the world», – the document points out. It highlights that within these new frameworks the UN role, which is to protect the poorest and the most vulnerable groups of population and to prevent global threats, including those related to the climate change, terrorism and other challenges, has taken shape.

The Secretary General expressed his hope that the new generation will anyway consider 2009 as the turning point in the history, when the governments and peoples of all countries made a deliberate decision to strengthen the international community and to get united for resolving the global problems through taking goal-oriented measures.

«Let's unite in order to make 2009 the year of world transformations, revival of the universal hope and solidarity, updating the basis of international security and peace, sustainable development and respect of human rights», – called Ban Ki-moon.

Source: UN news center

## Geneva Forum discussed the problem of radioactive wastes in Central Asia

An high-level international forum took place in Geneva, Palais de Nations, on June 29, 2009, on the subject of "Uranium tailings in Central Asia: local problems, regional consequences, global solution".

It was organized at the initiative of the Government of Kyrgyzstan with the support of the United Nations Development Program.

Forum participants discussed the ways of solution of the tailings problem. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the termination of uranium extraction at most of the mining camps, their condition had considerably deteriorated. Today they present an increased risk for the population. Summing up Geneva meeting results, Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Igor Chudinov emphasized that this is a problem which requires an immediate global solution.

Igor Chudinov informed the Forum participants on his Government decision to establish an Agency on Atomic and Radiation Security.

"This will allow for a more coordinated approach at the national level and will make it possible to ensure communication with neighboring countries and the international



community. This body will need support of the key international partners" - said Head of the Government of Kyrgyzstan.

Today, the tailings inherited from the military-industrial complex of the former USSR and located in the territory of Central Asia contain over 800 million tons of uranium wastes. The Declaration adopted by the Forum

identifies concrete ways aimed at the solution of this problem.

Source: [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

## In Kyrgyzstan from 2002 to 2009, 25 339 families suffered from natural disasters

In Kyrgyzstan from 2002 to 2009, 25 339 families suffered from natural disasters

- reported today Director of State Architecture and Construction Agency Kanybek Narbaev at the session of Parliament committee on development of industry, trade, tourism, small and medium business, transport and communications

By his data, 4 882 of 25 339 families during 2008 are provided with loans. The total amount makes 906,2 million

soms. <<According to the government decree, the affected population are provided with loans of 200,000 soms for constructing the house, or with non-repayable one-off amount of 50,000 soms, - added Kanybek Narbaev.>>

As the official marks, Ministry of Finance in 2009 allocated 489 mio. soms to support victims, of which 439 mln. soms was received. The most of the funds - 406 mio. soms - was disbursed, while the remaining will

be transferred by the end of a year, - added Kanybek Narbaev.

A part of allocated funds remained unused, and the Head of State Construction Agency explained it, that it was the fault of population who did not submit in time the documents for receiving support.

Source - News agency 24.kg

## Summary of the Evaluation Commission on good practices

Joint UNISDR and UNICEF initiative «Examples of good practices and tools on DRR in education in Central Asia», organized within DIPECHO V with support of DG ECHO»

On 27-28 October 2009 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, there was held the session of Evaluation Commission on selection of the best practices in the field of risk reduction and education in Central

Asian countries. The Evaluation Commission was composed of five independent experts from Central Asian countries. During the meeting four winners, were selected, including NGOs «Little Earth» from Tajikistan, «Man and Nature» from Kazakhstan and «Hayott» from Uzbekistan. One more award was given to UNDP Kazakhstan for the project «Risk Management at local level in seismic risk zones of Kazakhstan».

In total 25 works were presented in regional competition. Materials presented for initiative will be included into the Collection of good practices and tools on DRR in education in Central Asia which will be broadly disseminated among all partners and stakeholders.

## Tajikistan appeals for over \$ 7 million to help recovery from floods and mudflows

**12 August 2009** the Government of Tajikistan launched an appeal today for \$7.7 million to help people recover from floods and mudflows triggered by heavy rains in April and May, and to rebuild disaster-resilient communities.

According to the official data, twenty-six people were killed and over 3,000 displaced by the floods and mudflows. Over 2,000 houses, hospitals, schools and other buildings were destroyed in a period of 6 weeks.

“Government and humanitarian actors in Tajikistan were able to provide immediate relief from existing stocks. Now we must give affected people the chance to restart their lives. For this, we are counting on the support of the international community”, said Michael Jones, United Nations Resident Representative in Tajikistan.

Over 2,000 people still need access to proper housing before December, when temperatures can fall to -25°C. Supplies of essential medicines and school materials need to be replenished. Some 20,000 people still need access to drinking water, and 3,100 children are waiting to go

back to school. Additional funding would also allow the restoration of health care in all disaster-struck communities.

Overall, 18 projects with their focus in the most disaster hit areas in the central and southern part of Tajikistan were included into the appeal.

«As of today Tajikistan received more than USD 1 mln. The received sum makes 14% of the required USD 7,7mln. More than 10% of the funds requested for restoration of houses were received, and activities on access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene improvement were supported with 53% of the required funds. Only four of 18 projects have received financing partially or fully».



**The international conference on corporate responsibility, management and legislation of emergency situations**

The international conference on corporate responsibility, management of emergency situations and legislation in this field will be held in Bhopal, India on 4-6 December.

The international conference will be held on emergency situations management and corporate responsibility during large industrial catastrophes. Conference will mark the 25 anniversary of the Bhopal accident.

In this event, the issues on emergency management in the large industrial enterprises and also a wide range of legislation on environment will be considered. During the conference numerous examples on the use of the environmental law and analysis of technical, political and legal parties of corporate responsibility will be given.

Organizers of the conference are National Indian Institute on disaster risk management and National Institute of Law. The participants in the conference will be representatives of public organizations, experts of some corporations, scientists, experts in the field of the environmental law and students.

For detailed information refer to:  
National Law Institute University Bhopal  
Dr Anil K Gupta, Associate Professor, NIDM  
[envirosafe2007@gmail.com](mailto:envirosafe2007@gmail.com)  
<http://www.cbclnliu.com/html/events.html>

**Training course on disaster risk management at community level**

This training course will be held from 23 November to 4 December 2009 in Silang, Philippines. The organizer of the course is International Institute of Rural Reconstruction <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/contacts/v.php?id>

Training course on disaster risk management at community level is aimed to raise capacity of participants in the field of prevention and mitigation of negative consequences of natural disasters. Preparedness to emergency situations and competent management in case of their occurrence can considerably reduce the scope of vulnerability of communities located in high risk areas.

Disasters frequently cause catastrophic damage to places, where sufficient measures on disaster risk reduction are not taken, and there is no effective system of preparedness and response to emergency situations. These important aspects will be considered within this training course.

Representatives of local and international NGOs, employees of corresponding official authorities and UN agencies, who are interested receiving new knowledge and strengthening capacity for further integration of the issues of ES management at the level of local communities into their key programs and projects, can take part in a course

For detailed information refer to:

Education and Training Program  
International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR)  
Y.C. James Yen Center, Silang, Cavite  
4118, Philippines  
Tel: (63-46) 414-3216  
Email: [education.training@iirr.org](mailto:education.training@iirr.org)  
Web site: <http://www.iirr.org>

## Disasters through photo lens

The Regional Office of the UN International Strategy on Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) in Central Asia, with financial support of European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) announces competition for the best photos on the topic of disaster risk reduction and fighting natural and man made disasters under the motto «Disasters through photo lens». All interested persons from Central Asia countries can take part in this year's competition, both professionals, and amateurs, without age limitations.

The competition prize fund constitutes USD2000. Winners will be selected by an independent, specially created commission. Jury from UNISDR Regional office staff will select the best photos and will divide the award among authors. The best photos will be used in various exhibitions and published in UNISDR distribution materials, indicating the names of the authors.

Photos can be on prevention and mitigation of consequences of natural disasters, response and recoverage, gender aspects, and also adaptation of population to climate change. Closing date for submitting photos is 26 November 2009

More detailed information:  
Zafar Mahmudov, UN ISDR Regional Office for CA  
[zafar.mahmoudov@undp.org](mailto:zafar.mahmoudov@undp.org)

## Seminar «Improvement of forecasting, climate and hydrological services in Central Asia and Caucasus»

Seminar on “Improvement of forecasting, climate and hydrological services in Central Asia” will be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on November 10-12, 2009. The region's countries have been facing catastrophic consequences of disasters more frequently. The prognosis shows that the occurring climate change will mostly increase the frequency and intensity of natural cataclysms. Disasters, spurred by the climate change, will cause more damage to the social and economic development of countries. The World Bank and the UNISDR Secretariat in close cooperation with the World Meteorological Organization and Regional Organization for Economic Cooperation in Central Asia developed the Initiative on disaster risk management in Central Asia and Caucasus in September 2008, in order to reduce the risks and strengthen the capacity at the national and regional levels.

The main goal of the seminar will be to discuss issues of development of hydrometeorological

services, improvement of the quality of information on weather and climate, as well as the system of its collection and dissemination. Opportunities will also be considered by the donor community for providing financial and technical assistance to services and establishments to stimulate further improvement of national and regional hydrometeorological systems.

More detailed information can be obtained from: Goulsara Pusatova, Regional coordinator at Sub-regional Office of UNISDR in CA [goulsara.pusatova@undp.org](mailto:goulsara.pusatova@undp.org)

## 15 Conference of the Parties on Climate Change

From 7 to 18 December 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark, 15th Conference of the Parties to UN Framework Convention on Climate Change will be held. The Conference will be organized by the Government of Denmark and UN Secretariat on FCCC

Annual Conferences of the UN FCCC countries and Kyoto Protocol are one of the biggest international political conference. In the process of pushing climate change issue to the top of international agenda, annual Conferences of the Parties became one their most important and central moments in international policy.

More than 15 000 persons will take part in the Conference, including official delegates and authorized representatives of the countries, representatives of public and international organizations, observers from international Institutions and UN agencies, and also mass media staff

The Conference in Copenhagen should become the key for adopting and signings a new post-Kyoto agreement which would lead to reduction of technological emissions of greenhouse gases, and would be supported by as big number of countries as possible.

The Kyoto Protocol defines the target's for emissions from 2008 to 2012. On 13th Annual Conference of the Parties in Bali the decision was made to start work on concluding a new agreement for the forthcoming years. This plan is the so-called Bali Action Plan, and is aimed at concluding a new agreement which should be reached on 15th Annual Conference in Copenhagen in 2009.

For more detailed information visit:  
<http://ru.cop15.dk>

EUROPEAN COMMISSION



## Humanitarian Aid

### What is European Commission's humanitarian aid?

Since 1992, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) has funded relief to millions of victims of natural and man-made disasters outside the European Union.

Aid is channelled impartially to the affected populations, regardless of their race, ethnic group, gender, age, nationality or political affiliation.

Part of the department's mission is to raise public awareness of the issue at stake.

### Working with partners in the field

For humanitarian aid, the Commission works with around 200 operational partners, including specialized United Nations agencies, the Red Cross/Crescent movement and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

### A key donor

The European Commission is one of the biggest sources of humanitarian aid in the world. In 2008, it provided €937 million for humanitarian programmes. This does not include the aid given separately by the European Union's 27 Member States. The Commission's support went to projects in more than 70 countries. The funds are spent on goods and services such as food, clothing, shelter, medical provisions, water supplies, sanitation, emergency repairs and mine-clearing. The Commission also funds disaster preparedness and mitigation projects in regions prone to natural catastrophes.

International Strategy

ISDR  
for Disaster Reduction

**The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)** is the focal point in the UN System aiming at building disaster resilient communities by promoting increased awareness of the importance of disaster reduction as an integral component of sustainable development, with the goal of reducing human, social, economic and environmental losses due to natural hazards and related technological and environmental disasters.

To this end, the UNISDR promotes links, synergies and coordination among disaster reduction activities in the socio-economic, humanitarian and development fields. It serves as an international platform for risk reduction, contributing to policy integration, information sharing and developing awareness campaigns, and producing articles, magazines, and other publications and promotional materials related to disaster reduction. The ISDR-Secretariat headquarters in Geneva conducts outreach programs through its regional units in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Central Asia. The outreach office covering Central Asia is located in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. UNISDR in Central Asia aims to facilitate national adaptation and adoption of the guidelines outlined in the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), and by so doing to strengthen coordination at regional and national levels of activity.



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UN ISDR Subregional office in Central Asia  
Quarterly information bulletin  
[www.preventionweb.net](http://www.preventionweb.net)