

XII. The UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)

A. General Information

The UN/ISDR is the focal point in the UN System to promote synergies and coordination between disaster reduction activities in the socio-economic, humanitarian and development fields. It also serves to support policy integration, and to act as an international information clearinghouse on disaster reduction. The UN/ISDR develops awareness campaigns and produces articles, journals, and promotional materials related to disaster reduction. The UN/ISDR headquarters is based at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. It conducts outreach programs in Costa Rica and Kenya.

B. The UN/ISDR Mission

The UN/ISDR aims 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. In order to fulfill this mission, the UN/ISDR promotes four objectives as tools towards reaching disaster reduction for all:

1. Promoting increased global public awareness of the importance of disaster reduction.
2. Obtaining commitment from public authorities to implement disaster reduction policies and actions.
3. Stimulating interdisciplinary and intersectoral partnerships, including the expansion of risk reduction networks.
4. Improving scientific knowledge about disaster reduction.

The UN/ISDR maintains an extremely thorough website which includes information on their organization, disaster statistics, public awareness, the Inter-Agency Taskforce on Disaster Reduction, media, links, meetings and conferences on disaster reduction, tsunami early warning, on-line dialogues and much more.

To Access the ISDR Website Please Click Here

<http://www.unisdr.org>

C. UN/ISDR Events

1. WCDR

The United Nations General Assembly recently requested that the ISDR secretariat serve as the secretariat of a World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR). The purpose of this conference was to take stock of progress in disaster risk reduction accomplished since the Yokohama Conference of 1994, and to make plans for the next ten years. The WCDR was composed of three main processes, an intergovernmental segment, a thematic segment, and a public forum. The main outcome of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction was a strong commitment of the international community to address disaster reduction and to engage in a determined, results-oriented plan of action for the next decade. The WCDR was hosted by the Japanese government in Kobe, Japan and took place January 18 – 22, 2005. The WCDR brought together some 4,000 people from governmental and non-governmental bodies around the world, with participants from 168 States, 78 observer organizations, and over 560 journalists.

2. ISDR

The ISDR is currently promoting their Third International Conference on Early Warning (EWC III). The EWCIII is slated to convene in Bonn Germany, under UN auspices, March 27 - 29, 2006. Salvano Briceño, Director of the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, stated, "the conference's main outcome will be the

launch of a range of short and long-term early warning projects in high priority countries." The meeting is expected to bring together over 600 representatives of governments, parliaments and international organizations, as well as practitioners and members of the scientific community.

For More Information on the EWC III Please Click Here: <http://www.ewc3.org>

For More Information on the WCDR Please Click Here: <http://www.unisdr.org/wcdr/>

D. The Inter-Agency Taskforce on Disaster Reduction

The ISDR combines the strengths of many key players through the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, The IATF/DR is the principal body for the development of disaster reduction policy. It is headed by the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and consists of 25 UN, international, regional and civil society organizations. The purpose of the IATF/DR is to serve as the main forum within the United Nations for continued and concerted emphasis on natural disaster reduction, in particular for defining strategies for international cooperation at all levels in this field, while ensuring complimentary action with other agencies. The mandated functions of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction are:

1. to serve as the main forum within the United Nations system for devising strategies and policies for the reduction of natural hazards;
2. to identify gaps in disaster reduction policies and programs and recommend remedial action;
3. to provide policy guidance to the ISDR secretariat; and
4. to convene ad hoc meetings of experts on issues related to disaster reduction.

For More Information on the IATF/DR Please Click Here

<http://www.unisdr.org/eng/task%20force/tf-functions-responsibilities-eng.html>