

**BEIJING DECLARATION
ON
THE 2005 WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION**

27 May 2004,
International Conference on Disaster Reduction,
Beijing, People's Republic of China.

An International Conference on Disaster Reduction was held in Beijing, People's Republic of China, from 25 to 27 May 2004. The Conference was co-organized by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China and the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) Secretariat. The Conference was part of the preparatory process for the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR II) to be held in Kobe-Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005.

More than 100 delegates from 18 countries and six (6) international organizations attended the Conference to further promote regional cooperation and collaboration in disaster reduction, and the integration of disaster reduction into development planning, policies and implementation.

The Conference benefited from recommendations made by two regional conferences held in February and March 2004 : (1) the Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2004 held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, from 4 to 6 February 2004; and (2) the Regional Consultation on Disaster Management held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 29 to 31 March 2004.

The Conference also took into consideration the outcomes of two consultations held in early May 2004 : (1) the 9th Session of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) held in Geneva on 4 and 5 May 2004 ; and (2) the 1st Inter-Governmental Preparatory Committee Meeting for the WCDR II also held in Geneva on 6 and 7 May 2004.

At the end of the Conference, the delegates issued the following declaration called "Beijing Declaration on the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction":

On Disaster Reduction & Sustainable Development in Asia

In today's dynamic Asia, identification of hazards and vulnerability and commitment to disaster and risk management are essential for sustainable development. As this is also highlighted in the Principles of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World (1994), we should relate our current knowledge and previous experience to the needs of the future.

Therefore, we recognize the importance of contributing to the ongoing Yokohama (Strategy & Plan of Action) Review coordinated by the UN/ISDR Secretariat, a review of the achievements, remaining challenges and required additions since the Yokohama Strategy was adopted in 1994.

The growing understanding and acceptance of the relationship between disaster and risk management and sustainable development was further emphasized in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2002. It is also accepted as essential for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

In the same vein, we are of the view that it is even more important that our developed abilities and resources help to define and implement a Specific Programme of Action composed of concrete objectives that contribute to the building of disaster-resilient communities.

Our General Conclusions

We fully recognize that hazards are on the rise, so is the impact of disasters throughout Asia. It is clear that sustainable development can only be achieved by integrating disaster risk reduction into overall socio-economic planning and practice.

Presentations and panel discussions during the 25-27 May 2004 Beijing International Conference on Disaster Reduction reviewed the progress made and the remaining challenges since the adoption of the Yokohama Strategy in 1994.

General awareness on disaster issues and capacities for early warning have increased, and more countries have accepted that linking disaster risk reduction with development planning and practice is essential to sustainable development. Therefore, mainstreaming disaster risk reduction

in development planning and practice has been repeatedly emphasized throughout the Conference.

Even though growing progress has been made in each country in the field of disaster and risk management, more needs to be done to advance sustainable development in Asia. We believe that it is essential that political, professional and public interests converge so that all efforts are activated and responsibilities fully assumed in disaster reduction.

Most importantly, we appeal for further political commitment to disaster reduction and an increased financial investment in disaster risk reduction through local and national budget allocation and international support.

Our Primary Recommendations

1. Governance: Institutional Policy & Framework

- **Increase national political commitment to the integration of disaster risk reduction in sustainable development planning and practice** by formulating a holistic policy and comprehensive legislation on disaster and risk management, integrating risk reduction in various sectoral policies, and allocating funds for disaster risk reduction at regional, national and local levels.
- **Enhance the role of Local Government authorities and community leaders in the implementation of national policies and legislation on disaster risk reduction at community level** by increasing the comprehension, knowledge and capability of Local Government officials in disaster risk reduction.
- **Enhance the capacity of Local Government authorities, with support from national dedicated agencies, to plan and finance a safer built environment** by making land, materials, training and labour available for shelter and urban development.

2. Risk Identification, Assessment & Early Warning

- **Encourage the development of an information baseline including hazard mapping and risk assessment in urban and rural settings, to strengthen risk monitoring through joint efforts by experts from the scientific community and people from communities living with disaster risks** by exchanging information, good practices, knowledge and relevant experience at regional, national and local levels, and establishing mechanisms for disaster risk monitoring and risk assessment in the framework of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR)
- **Improve early warning systems and ensure their effectiveness for disaster reduction** by providing support to capacity building and the enhancement of links between policy makers, experts and the public.
- **Encourage line Ministries and agencies, Government at different levels and civil societies to mainstream disaster risk management** by supporting cross-sectoral programme design and implementation of practical activities in development strategies.

3. Knowledge & Education

- **Increase the awareness of public authorities and the general public on disaster reduction from national to local levels** by carrying out specific activities in schools and other formal and informal education and training facilities, with particular attention to a gender-balanced approach and other pertinent cultural impacts.
- **Encourage the active involvement of electronic and other media, educational institutions and communities in the campaign for raising awareness of disaster risk reduction** by supporting capacity building and training institutions, providing platform and mechanisms for sharing information, knowledge and experience, and emphasizing local experience and traditional knowledge.
- **Improve the relationship between and application of experiences** by increasing the understanding of data collection and information and knowledge management.

4. *Reduction of Underlying Risk Factors*

- **Improve appropriate scientific ability on disaster risk reduction at regional and national levels** by encouraging the establishment of a regional platform for knowledge sharing, and the translation of scientific data into practical guidance for Local Government authorities and community groups.
- **Encourage the application of high technology, e.g. remote sensing and GIS (Geographical Information System), in disaster risk assessment and monitoring** by providing support to pilot projects and initiatives on disaster risk mitigation.
- **Encourage the adoption of disaster impact assessment systems and financial instruments and mechanisms such as insurance to share risks, particularly at local level** by sharing existing practices and experience.

5. *Disaster Preparedness & Contingency Planning*

- **Increase the effectiveness of disaster response, relief and recovery** by using disaster risk assessment results, based on hazard mapping and vulnerability assessment in disaster preparedness and emergency contingency planning, and by preventing disaster recovery programmes from creating new disaster risks.
- **Give special attention to the social, cultural and economic needs of women, children and most disadvantaged groups in disaster and risk management** by using participatory tools such as vulnerability and capability assessments.
- **Increase the efficiency of disaster response, relief and recovery through improved early warning systems** by increasing the appreciation of early warning among policy and decision makers, the accuracy of early warning by scientists, and the comprehension of people living with disaster risks at community level.
- **Enhance the efficiency of emergency/disaster management within countries** by having a united management system to reduce duplication and wastage of efforts and resources.

6. *Regional, International Support for Disaster Reduction at National and Local Levels*

- **Strengthen cooperation and collaboration in disaster reduction at regional level** by using existing platforms for continuing dialogue and consultations among countries concerned, and encouraging exchange of knowledge and experts leading to closer partnerships in disaster risk reduction
- **Enhance international and regional support to National Governments in disaster reduction** by facilitating the exchange of knowledge and information on disaster issues, and developing concrete initiatives and projects yielding ready-to-use outputs for advancing disaster risk reduction at national and community levels.
- **Strengthen the financial base for disaster risk reduction activities and investment** by encouraging international agencies and organizations as well as domestic capital markets and community-based finance systems to provide resources to initiatives that integrate disaster risk reduction in sustainable development at regional, national and local levels.

Our Final Observations

Governments have unavoidable responsibility for motivating and providing protection against disasters. However, success will depend ultimately on effective measures undertaken by Governments and the coping capabilities of local people themselves. Indeed, it is people's increased understanding, active participation and sustained actions that will enable them to live with risk in more resilient communities.

*** Add a list of countries and international organizations**