The International Council for Science (ICSU)

Statement before the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction

The International Council for Science, ICSU, as a participant on the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, is pleased to make a short presentation to this First Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The International Council for Science can be said to represent the international science community. It has membership of 110 national scientific bodies from around the world and of 29 international scientific unions representing a broad range of scientific study, including all hazards. ICSU's extensive membership network constitutes an international forum for scientific research and policy development. ICSU is frequently called upon to speak on behalf of the global scientific community and to act as an advisor in matters ranging from ethics to the environment. It also has activities in capacity building and technology transfer.

Further, ICSU has extensive experience in the development and conduct of international scientific programs. The World Climate Research Programme, co-sponsored with the World Meteorological Organization and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO and the International Polar Year, also co-sponsored with the WMO, are just two examples.

The Hyogo Framework for Action states: "*The starting point for reducing disaster risk and for promoting a culture of disaster resilience lies in the knowledge of the hazards and the physical, social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities to disasters that most societies face, and of the ways in which hazards and vulnerabilities are changing in the short and long term,....*"

ICSU, responding to the Hyogo Framework, is well-advanced in planning a new inter-disciplinary, international research programme on natural and human-induced environmental

hazards and disasters, with the involvement of natural, socio-economic, health and engineering sciences and technology. The scientific objectives are:

- To characterize hazards, vulnerability and risk;
- To understand effective decision making in complex and changing risk contexts; and
- To reduce risk through knowledge-based actions.

With a multi-hazard approach in identifying, assessing and monitoring disaster risks, its scientific outputs will enable enhanced early warning and the knowledge generated will support the development of a culture of safety and resilience at all levels. This global research programme is directly focussed on providing knowledge for more effective global societal responses leading to risk reductions and to directly contribute towards meeting the strategic goals of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

This cohesive research Programme will be complementary to and develop appropriate partnerships with existing and planned initiatives. The Programme will identify and fill the knowledge gaps and will provide links between research results and the practice of decision-making. The ISDR, UNESCO and WMO have been participants in the development of the research strategy. The International Council for Science, drawing on its broad membership and expertise and on its proven record of scientific accomplishment, is inviting co-sponsors and partners, recognizing that the most effective path forward is a multi-stakeholder initiative focusing on disaster risk reduction.

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5 June 2007