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**PROPOSAL OF THE UNDER-
SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR
HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS TO
STRENGTHEN THE ISDR SYSTEM**

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Strengthening the ISDR System

Background and Discussion Paper

For the Consultation Process with ISDR Stakeholders

31 December 2006

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PART 1

1. Background

Out of a widely felt need for a common international framework for responding to the challenge presented to the international community by the increasing incidence and scale of disasters, the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 54/219 of 22 December 1999 approved the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) as a successor arrangement to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), which was launched by the General Assembly in 1989.

In the same resolution, the Assembly endorsed the proposal of the Secretary-General (a) to establish an Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR)¹, with representation from all relevant United Nations bodies and members of the scientific and technical community, including regional representation, to serve as the main forum within the United Nations for continued and concerted emphasis on disaster reduction, and (b) to establish a secretariat for the Strategy. The IATF/DR and the ISDR secretariat have functioned under the direct authority of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs since 1 January 2000, with the objective of facilitating the implementation of the goals of the Strategy.

General Assembly resolution 54/219 followed the resolution 1999/63 of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in which the objectives of the Strategy were defined as: (a) to enable communities to become resilient to the effects of natural, technological and environmental hazards, thus reducing the compound risk posed to social and economic vulnerabilities within modern societies; and (b) to proceed from protection against hazards to the management of risk, by integrating risk prevention strategies into sustainable development activities.

The ISDR reflects a major conceptual shift, which took place during the IDNDR, from the traditional emphasis on disaster response towards holistic disaster reduction. It recognizes that natural hazards in themselves do not inevitably lead to disasters, but disasters result from the impact of natural hazards on vulnerable social systems. In other words, disasters can be prevented through conscious human action designed to reduce vulnerability.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, Johannesburg, 2002) reinforced awareness of the need for risk and vulnerability reduction in order to secure sustainable development, and the imperative for development sectors to channel investment into disaster reduction activities. The outcome of this Summit has provided the ISDR with a concrete set of objectives for integrating and mainstreaming risk reduction into development policies and processes.

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR, Kobe, Japan, 2005) represented a further landmark in worldwide commitment to implementing a disaster reduction agenda. The 168 States attending the Conference adopted The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (A/CONF. 206/6), which was endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 60/195. Developed through exhaustive negotiations between States, experts and collaborating organizations, the Framework's 10-year plan reflects the intention to take a holistic approach in identifying and putting into action complex multidisciplinary disaster risk reduction measures.

¹ Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/219 and following the recommendations made in the report of the Secretary General (A/54/497) on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction: Successor Arrangements, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction was established in early 2000 as the main forum within the United Nations system for devising strategies and policies for the reduction of natural hazards; for identifying gaps in disaster reduction policies and programmes and recommending remedial action; for ensuring complementarity of action by agencies involved in disaster reduction; for providing policy guidance to the Secretariat; and for convening meetings of experts on issues related to disaster reduction.

The Hyogo Framework for Action draws on the guidance set by the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World (1994) with the expected outcome of the substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environment assets of communities and countries. It calls for the pursuit of three strategic goals² for the substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries within the next 10 years in conformity with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Drawing on the conclusions of the review of the Yokohama Strategy, the Hyogo Framework for Action has also defined five priorities for action³ and identified the collective and individual roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in its implementation and follow-up.

Strengthening the ISDR system has become necessary to respond to current disaster trends and the increased expectations of and demand by nations and communities for support to implement the Hyogo Framework. Strengthening the ISDR system is needed to increase political commitment and financing for disaster risk reduction including in the development sectors. More coherence and better coordination at global and regional levels through joint system planning and prioritized deliverables would provide the enabling environment and critical technical support to increase the capacity of nations and communities to address effectively disaster risk.

The Hyogo Framework for Action has given new impetus for strengthening the ISDR, which is evolving more and more into global *system of partnership* for disaster risk reduction. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (USG) launched, after the WCDR, a consultative process to consider practical ways of strengthening the ISDR system, building on existing mandates, institutions, partnerships and mechanisms and with the key purpose of implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action. The UN Secretary-General's reports on the Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in 2005 and in 2006⁴ refer to the proposed ISDR strengthening and outline its main elements⁵.

2. Rationale for strengthening the ISDR system⁶

Countries and regions have evolved a wide range of institutional mechanisms, strategies and policies to manage disaster risk over recent decades. The degree of development, effectiveness and complexity of such mechanisms, at both the national and regional levels, varies between Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and other regions, as well as within each region. As disaster loss has continued to increase and with the enhanced awareness on the disaster risk problematic, the number of global, regional, national, sectoral and local organizations engaging in disaster risk reduction has grown exponentially and the coordination challenges at all levels have become more complex.

The ISDR system until now has been structured at the global level through the IATF/DR and associated thematic Working Groups, with only limited representation and outreach. While a number of countries have created National Platforms to advocate for and promote disaster risk reduction, the ISDR system needs to be empowered at the regional and sub-regional levels to convene and co-ordinate disaster risk

² These strategic goals are:

1. The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.
2. The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.
3. The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes in the reconstruction of affected communities.

³ The five priorities for action are:

1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.
2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.
3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.
4. Reduce the underlying risk factors.
5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

⁴ A/60/180 and A/61/229.

⁵ See chapter III of this document.

⁶ The first part of this section draws on the work of the ISDR Reference Group.

reduction initiatives. At the global level the ISDR system needs to be broadened to include the wide range of actors involved in disaster risk reduction initiatives including states. While individual agencies of the Inter-agency Task Force, as well as the ISDR secretariat have their own work-plans, there is at present no common framework for work-planning.

The rationale for strengthening the ISDR and describing it as a system of partnerships is based on the need for making substantial progress in implementing a world-wide disaster risk reduction agenda, which calls for concerted efforts by all stakeholders. The Hyogo Framework for Action acknowledges that disaster risk reduction is a cross-cutting issue in the context of sustainable development and therefore an important element for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

The Hyogo Framework for Action emphasizes that the primary responsibility for implementation and follow-up lies with States, involving national public administration structures, the scientific community and civil society. States are called upon to build a strong sense of ownership of disaster risk reduction within their populations and support local Governments' capacities. States should also conceive mechanisms that allow bottom-up disaster risk reduction initiatives, originating at the community level and contributing to the shaping of disaster risk reduction policy and programmes at all levels.

Hence, the successful implementation of the Hyogo Framework requires a strengthened capacity of the ISDR system to provide a solid basis for action. Increased commitment and engagement by States, intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, UN and other international agencies, regional entities and civil society organizations, and systematic tracking of disaster reduction investments are required. Only through more, and more effective partnerships among these stakeholders can disaster risk reduction become an integral component of environmental, economic and social development. The direct participation of States⁷ in the ISDR system is widely felt to be particularly crucial for building a stronger, more systematic and coherent international effort to support national disaster reduction activities.

As United Nations reform moves forward to bring all United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies closer together in achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, greater coherence at the global and regional levels will be needed. Political commitment is also needed for the systematic integration of risk reduction into development plans, with increased provision of resources and application of knowledge of disaster reduction by Member States, their communities and the wider international community⁸.

3. Process of establishing a strengthened ISDR system

Initial proposals for the future functions and development of the ISDR were based on a number of studies and consultations on the functioning of the ISDR mechanisms, its current capacities and potential and the capacities of the United Nations system to deal with disaster risk issues. These built on the Reports of the Secretary-General (A/54/497; A/54/136-E/1999/89; A/60/180; A/61/229), General Assembly resolutions (54/219; 59/231; 60/195) and Economic and Social Council Resolution 1999/63.

An extensive consultation with Strategy partners and national organizations has subsequently provided the basis for strengthening the institutional framework of the Strategy, as outlined in the previous report to the General Assembly on its implementation (A/60/180). This process is led by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and builds on the UN Secretary-General's reports on the Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/60/180 and A/61/229), the

⁷ States so far formally were not part of the ISDR system, except for providing the overall governing foundation through the UN General Assembly. They could however attend the meetings of the Inter Agency Task Force as observers.

⁸ These needs were highlighted in the recently released Report of the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence, in particular providing for more coherent and consolidated disaster reduction support to Governments, and linking the system to national development strategies, with a view to "disaster-proofing" the Millennium Development Goals. ("Delivering as one" – Report of the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence, November 2006).

outcome of the discussions of a “preliminary Management Oversight Board”, the work of the “ISDR Reference Group”, consultations with the ISDR Support Group, and with regional groupings as well as an ISDR Stakeholder Workshop held in Geneva in October 2005. The following summarizes the outcome of this process.

3.1 UN Secretary-General’s reports on the Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/60/180 and A/61/229)

The key elements of the proposed strengthened ISDR system were outlined in the UN Secretary-General’s reports on the Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction A/60/180 and A/61/229. The latter report defines the main aims as follows:

The main aims are to widen the participation of Governments and organizations in the Strategy system; to raise the profile of disaster reduction in the priorities and programmes of organizations; and to build a stronger, more systematic and coherent international effort to support national disaster reduction activities. The strengthened Strategy system will add value through coordination, greater political awareness of disaster reduction at the highest levels and the creation of a global disaster reduction movement, coupled with an output-oriented, high-impact joint work programme for the Strategy system.⁹

In the strengthened system, a “Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction” with wide membership open to all Member States would serve as an expanded and reformed successor to the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction.

The UN Secretary-General’s report A/60/180 points out the intention of the strengthened ISDR system to support regional networks for advocacy for disaster risk reduction and cooperation at regional and subregional levels in support to national initiatives and platforms.

3.2 Preliminary Management Oversight Board

The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs convened in New York an advisory group of senior managers from the United Nations Development Group, the World Bank, WMO, the United Nations Environment Programme and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, termed the “preliminary Management Oversight Board” which has so far met twice in New York (March and October 2006). This group was set up to support the Chair of the ISDR system in providing UN system-wide leadership and high-level advocacy for disaster risk reduction in general and for providing advice on steering the ISDR strengthening process in particular.

3.3 ISDR Reference Group

The Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, at its twelfth session in November 2005, established a small informal “Reference Group”¹⁰, made up of representatives of UNDP, OCHA, UNESCO, WMO, UNEP, UNICEF, World Bank, ProVention Consortium, IFRC and the ISDR secretariat and the Government of Switzerland (as the Chair of the ISDR Support Group). The African Union Commission, ActionAid, and InterAmerican Development Bank were also consulted during this process. The Reference Group was tasked with providing advice on strengthening the ISDR system.

The Reference Group met several times during 2006 to discuss in detail the proposal of the USG to strengthen the ISDR system. Those discussions resulted in a number of specific suggestions. In a second phase starting in October 2006, the Group considered how to improve coherence of ISDR system partners through an ISDR system work planning framework, based on the Hyogo Framework of Action. The Group has produced a preliminary document¹¹, key elements of which are outlined in section 4.2.

⁹ A/61/229, paragraph 61

¹⁰ The “ISDR Reference Group” is chaired by Mr. Andrew Maskrey (UNDP/BCPR).

¹¹ Document entitled: Strengthening the capacity of the ISDR System and its work-planning process.

3.4 ISDR Support Group

The Geneva-based self-organized ISDR Support Group, which was established in 2002, met on several occasions in 2005 and 2006¹² under Swiss chairmanship as part of the follow-up process to the WCDR in Kobe, and to be briefed and consulted on the proposed strengthening of the ISDR system.

This Group, in an extended form¹³, is open to all interested States, providing an informal venue for discussions among governments on all relevant matters pertaining to the ISDR system.

The group provides support, advice, feedback and information exchange with the USG and his Deputy, as well as with the Director of the ISDR Secretariat. Its main aim is to mobilize the necessary political and financial support for the effective functioning of the strengthened ISDR system, focusing in particular on issues related to the participation of States in the system.

Further meetings of the ISDR Support Group focusing on the strengthened ISDR system and the preparatory process for the planned establishment of the Global Platform are planned for the coming months¹⁴.

3.5 Consultations with agencies in the regions

The ISDR secretariat organized in 2006 a number of consultations with international and regional organizations in Africa (6-7 June), Asia (19-20 June) and Latin America (June 27-28) allowing an examination of the proposal of strengthening the ISDR system in the light of the realities, current institutional mechanisms and challenges for implementing the Hyogo Framework in each region. The Chair of the ISDR Reference Group participated in some of these consultations.

¹² Since February 2005, the Group held several special meetings for briefings and discussions on the follow up process to the WCDR and the ISDR strengthening process. The Group's Chair, Switzerland, together with Ecuador, also hosted a side event on the ISDR strengthening process during ECOSOC in July 2006.

¹³ At its last meeting in November 2006, it was announced by the Chair that all Meetings of the ISDR Support Group would in future be open to all interested governments.

¹⁴ The 13 December 2006 workshop has been organised to intensify and enrich the consultation process.

PART 2

4. Key elements of the proposed strengthened ISDR system¹⁵

4.1 General considerations for strengthening the ISDR system

The strengthened ISDR system will be a system of partnerships composed of governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, international financial institutions and scientific and technical bodies and networks as well as civil society and the private sector, all of which have essential roles to play in disaster risk reduction. The ISDR system aims to identify clear roles and responsibilities and improve interaction among the various entities of the system. The strengthened system builds on existing partnerships and mechanisms that are active currently or can play a significant role in disaster risk reduction. Given the wide range of actors that need to be engaged, the strengthened ISDR system aims to generate and support a disaster risk reduction movement *at all levels*.

4.2 Guiding principles

The following are mutually dependent guiding principles for the strengthened ISDR system.

- The process of strengthening the ISDR system will evolve over time, beginning with the system as it currently exists and working outwards from that core. Disaster risk reduction at the national and sub-national levels is stimulated primarily by local and national political and economic incentives, which in turn promote action by local actors and communities. The ISDR system as a whole can add value to specific national and sub-national processes by bringing additional coherence and coordination to the support provided by the international community (global public goods) to strengthen and support national and local incentives and capacities. Hence the strengthening of the ISDR system will have to radiate outward from the global level, through the regional and sub-regional levels towards the national and local levels, with the activation of coordination mechanisms and joint work-planning at progressively more detailed levels.
- Given the considerable range of institutional mechanisms, strategies, plans and policies that already exist to promote disaster reduction in different regions and countries, the strengthened ISDR system should build on and enhance what currently exists.
- The heterogeneity of current institutional mechanisms across regions and countries expresses the complexity of the disaster risk problematic and completely different political, social, economic and cultural realities. This heterogeneity should be embraced by the ISDR system as a strength rather than as a weakness.
- In institutional terms, the evolution of the ISDR system should tend towards inclusiveness and promote the concept of a disaster risk reduction movement. The current membership should expand gradually to include the full range of Member States, regional and sub-regional organizations, NGOs, scientific, technical and academic organizations, financial institutions, private sector organisations, local authorities etc. that are involved in reducing disaster risk.
- Strengthening the regional level of the ISDR system is key to achieving greater coherence in support to national level implementation by regional and international organizations and should be given a particular priority in the strengthening of the system as a whole.
- In work-planning terms, the ISDR system should promote sets of coordinated, integrated and prioritised activities to address disaster risk reduction challenges specific to different geographic levels and thematic concerns. Work-planning processes should promote greater coherence and joint working between system partners.

¹⁵ This section draws on the outcome of the October 2005 Multistakeholder workshop, the proposal of the USG of 19 December and the work of the Reference Group.

- The priorities for strengthening the ISDR system and its work-planning processes must refer to achieving a measurable reduction in disaster losses at the national level, through the attainment of clearly articulated results, particularly in high risk, low capacity countries. All activities undertaken by the system at the global and regional levels should be guided by this rationale to generate enhanced political and economic incentives for reducing disaster risk at national level.
- The strengthening of the ISDR system should bring enhanced coherence to the work of the different partners at each scale, increasing effectiveness and avoiding duplication, overlaps and gaps. At the same time, it should provide a vehicle for increased investment in disaster risk reduction, at all levels.
- There is a mutually dependent relationship between the *form* and *function* in the ISDR system. New governance modalities, therefore, should exist mainly to enhance work-planning for greater achievement of results.

4.3 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

The core element in the proposed strengthened ISDR system is the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP/DRR). The GP/DRR will build on and expand the membership of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR). Membership in the GP/DRR will be open to States; hence the proposed change of name from IATF/DR to Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. It will also include United Nations and other international agencies, regional organizations, civil society organizations and technical and scientific bodies covering the social, economic, humanitarian, political, environmental and scientific fields committed to disaster risk reduction¹⁶.

The GP/DRR will maintain the mandate of IATF/DR¹⁷, i.e. to be the main forum for continued and concerted emphasis on disaster reduction. As such, it will serve as the global forum for disaster reduction and provide, in the coming years, strategic guidance and coherence for implementing the Hyogo Framework, and for sharing experiences and expertise among all its stakeholders. In line with the current arrangements for the IATF/DR, the USG will chair the GP/DRR. It will normally convene every two years in Geneva and at any other time as proposed by the Chair.

Programme Advisory Committee (PAC)

It is proposed that the Global Platform will set up a Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) as its subsidiary body. The PAC's role will be to keep abreast of trends in disaster risk reduction and bring them to the attention of the GP/DRR, identify gaps and opportunities, and provide advice to GP/DRR on policy, planning and reporting matters. The PAC will be composed of a maximum of 20 individuals, nominated by the Chair from among members of GP/DRR to represent a broad spectrum of expertise, including the humanitarian, development and environment/scientific sectors as well as international financing for development. They will be chosen from among all the ISDR stakeholder groups, including States, for their technical and professional competence and commitment to disaster risk reduction as well as their availability and willingness to serve. The proposal is to establish the PAC as a Standing Committee, which would meet throughout the year, when and if required.

Thematic support for the GP/DRR

Based and building on existing networks, clusters and other mechanisms, a number of self-organized **thematic platforms** mainly composed of technical and scientific bodies have already been established which are expected to participate actively in the strengthened ISDR system¹⁸ and provide thematic support to the GP/DRR. These are designed to integrate global technical expertise, regional concerns and

¹⁶ Criteria for membership of the Global Platform will need to be defined in particular for civil society organizations and technical and scientific bodies.

¹⁷ See footnote 1

¹⁸ On early warning, post-disaster recovery, El Niño phenomenon, wildland fires, training and capacity development and education. Platforms are being developed to address other specific areas such as environment and climate change, drought, seismic risks, etc., with a global or regional scope.

national capacities within the thematic areas of focus. They will contribute their expertise to the GP/DRR processes in support of national and regional efforts to implement the Hyogo Framework.

It is also proposed that the GP/DRR set up a Science Committee to guide and strengthen the scientific and technical basis of the ISDR. The proposed Committee will advocate and guide the necessary actions related to scientific and technical issues within the ISDR system, including related matters of innovation, such as setting agendas and priority questions, initiating studies and reports, and proposing the establishment of panels, working groups or other means to carry out those actions, subject to the consent or authorisation of the GP/DRR¹⁹. The specific work modalities of the Committee and its links to other parts of the ISDR system are under consultation.

4.4 The role of Governments

At national level

Primary responsibility for implementing disaster risk reduction policies rests with States.²⁰ Therefore, the ISDR system recognizes the leadership of States for disaster risk reduction at national level, including coordination, advocacy and implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action within their national context and governed by their own existing structures.

The Hyogo Framework for Action calls on States to “designate an appropriate national coordination mechanism for the implementation and follow-up of this Framework for Action, and communicate the information to the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction”. This includes the establishment of national coordination mechanisms that can assist national authorities to achieve multi-stakeholder and multi-sector involvement in disaster risk reduction to address disaster risk reduction in a holistic way in the context of socio-economic development and to drive and monitor implementation of national commitments.²¹

The Hyogo Framework for Action spells out further specific tasks that States may consider undertaking, including the preparation and publication of national baseline assessments of the status of disaster risk reduction, and the ratifying and implementation of relevant international legal instruments relating to disaster reduction.

At regional and global level

States should be encouraged, within their means and possibilities, to support the capacities of regional mechanisms and organizations and to assist in developing regional plans and policies. They may also contribute to strengthening the ISDR system by regional networking, advocacy, coordination, exchange of information and experience, scientific monitoring of hazards and vulnerability, as well as institutional capacity development and to deal with disaster risks.

At global level, States are expected to become key stakeholders in the GP/DRR and actively contribute to the substantive discussions and formulation of policy directions.

4.5 Participation of regional bodies

Regional bodies are expected to facilitate the convening of regional or sub-regional platforms, which include representatives from States, national platforms and regional intergovernmental organizations,

¹⁹ See in particular “Mechanisms for Scientific and Technical Inputs to the ISDR system”. Discussion Paper, ISDR Secretariat, 10 December 2005. 25p.

²⁰ A/RES. 60/196 *Recognizes* that each State has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development and for taking effective measures to reduce disaster risk, including for the protection of people on its territory, infrastructure and other national assets from the impact of disasters, including the implementation of and follow-up to the Hyogo Framework for Action. It also stresses the importance of international cooperation and partnerships to support those national efforts (paragraph 2).

²¹ National coordination mechanisms may take the form, where appropriate, of national platforms for disaster risk reduction in accordance with UNGA resolution 54/219. Members usually include line ministries, National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, NGOs, the private sector, academic and scientific institutions, and in some cases donor and UN representatives.

regional offices of UN agencies, regional economic commissions, regional development banks, regional political, economic and thematic inter-governmental organizations, committees, associations and networks, regional NGOs, scientific and technical organizations. Regional and sub-regional platforms will be instrumental for advocacy, dialogue, coordination and resource mobilization.

Regional strategies and networks will be developed to provide mutual support and more coherent action, ranging from inter-ministerial-level policy coordination to regional project cooperation. The ISDR secretariat will continue stimulating the development or strengthening of regional networks and platforms as part of the strengthened ISDR system. Regional bodies will develop, in partnership with regional platform members as appropriate, joint regional or subregional strategies (variously described as strategies, programmes or workplans). These will be geared in the next few years to providing support to countries of the region or sub-region in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action.²²

4.6 Supporting institutions and mechanisms

United Nations system

The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (USG) provides leadership for, and ensures coherence and coordination of the support provided to the ISDR system. The roles and accountability of the USG remain as they are articulated under the existing mandates from the General Assembly.²³ The USG will chair the GP/DRR.

The USG will convene and chair the Management Oversight Board (MOB). A representative of the UNDG will act as the Vice Chair. The MOB will advise the USG and assist him/her to ensure coherence within the international system, in particular among United Nations' bodies, on the provision of effective support for the ISDR system.

When appropriate, the UN Country Team, and in particular the Secretary-General's representative at a country level (Resident Coordinators, Humanitarian Coordinators, Special Representatives of the Secretary-General as the case may be), will, within the ISDR framework, support the national authorities and civil society in establishing risk reduction strategies and ensure that the UN programmes' strategies are fully in line with the three strategic goals, the five priority areas of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the national development priorities.

The Hyogo Framework for Action calls on the United Nations agencies²⁴, international financial institutions and other actors, within their mandates, priorities and resources to assume a number of tasks and responsibilities including the following:

- Encourage stronger linkages, coherence and integration of disaster risk reduction elements into the humanitarian and sustainable development fields;
- Strengthen the overall capacity of the United Nations system to assist disaster-prone developing countries in disaster risk reduction through appropriate means and coordination;

²² The Hyogo Framework identified five specific areas for action by regional bodies to be addressed in such strategies²²:

- (a) Promotion of regional programmes, including programmes for technical cooperation, capacity development, the development of methodologies and standards for hazard and vulnerability monitoring and assessment, the sharing of information and effective mobilization of resources, in view of supporting national and regional efforts;
- (b) Publishing of regional and sub-regional baseline assessments of the disaster risk reduction status, according to the needs identified and in line with their mandates;
- (c) Publishing of periodic reviews on progress in the region and on impediments and support needs, and assist countries, as requested, in the preparation of periodic national summaries of their programmes and progress;
- (d) Establishing or strengthening existing specialized regional collaborative centres, as appropriate, to undertake research, training, education and capacity building in the field of disaster risk reduction;
- (e) Support for the development of regional mechanisms and capacities for early warning to disasters, including for tsunamis.

²³ Report of the Secretary-General A/54/497 and General Assembly Resolution A/RES/54/219.

²⁴ United Nations agencies with a particular mandate and commitment to disaster risk reduction include UNDP, WMO, UNEP, UNESCO, UN/HABITAT, UNICEF and OCHA.

- Assist disaster-prone developing countries to set up national strategies and plans of action and programmes for disaster risk reduction and to develop their institutional and technical capacities in the field of disaster risk reduction;
- Integrate actions in support of the implementation of this Framework into relevant coordination mechanisms such as the United Nations Development Group and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (on humanitarian action);
- Integrate disaster risk reduction considerations into development assistance frameworks, such as the Common Country Assessments, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and Poverty Reduction Strategies;
- In close collaboration with existing networks and platforms, cooperate to support globally consistent data collection and forecasting on natural hazards, vulnerabilities and risks and disaster impacts at all scales.

International financial institutions

The strengthened ISDR system counts on the cooperation of and coordination with the international financial institutions, notably the World Bank and regional development banks. In June 2006, the World Bank approved a new Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, which will support national capacity building in 86 high-risk countries and enhance the speed and efficiency of international assistance for disaster recovery operations²⁵. Thirty-two countries prone to multiple disaster risks have been identified in the initial phase under the new Facility.

Other supporting institutions

The strengthened ISDR system will endeavour to develop close ties with key non-governmental actors and network organizations in disaster risk reduction actors including the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their Federation (IFRC), ProVention Consortium, NGOs and civil society organizations as well as representatives of private sector, media and academic institutions.

4.7 ISDR secretariat

The ISDR secretariat, overseen by the USG for Humanitarian Affairs, will service the strengthened ISDR system, including the GP/DRR, PAC and MOB. Its specific tasks include:

- a) Coordinating the preparation of a ISDR joint work programme at global level;
- b) Assisting the GP/DRR, PAC, and MOB in policy formulation;
- c) Serving as a clearinghouse for accessing technical expertise and resources in particular how thematic and regional platforms;
- d) Coordinating the production and dissemination of tools for disaster risk reduction;
- e) Conducting advocacy and communications activities on disaster risk reduction;
- f) Facilitating resource mobilisation for the ISDR system;
- g) Facilitating ISDR system support for the creation and/or strengthening of national platforms for disaster risk reduction;
- h) Managing the Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction;
- i) Publishing and disseminating reports on progress on the implementation of disaster reduction, including the global funding flows.

²⁵ The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery will promote global and regional advocacy and information sharing through consultations, information management tools and the exchange of good practices between countries as part of the strengthening of the Strategy system. It will support activities to mainstream hazard risk management in poverty reduction and economic growth strategies in low- and middle-income countries, synchronized with national planning processes (e.g., risk assessment reports and regional and national plans of action for risk reduction, early warning strategies and catastrophic risk financing initiatives).

4.8 Resourcing of the ISDR system

Disaster risk reduction requires sustained and predictable long-term investments, which requires a major revision in funding policy. The recent initiative of some donors to allocate funds equal to 10% of their emergency relief spending to long-term disaster risk reduction programmes represents an important move in this direction. Donors and funding institutions are encouraged to systematically invest in disaster risk reduction as an integral component of humanitarian and development cooperation.

Consultations are underway to strengthen the UN Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction to better enable the ISDR system to support the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, particular at global and regional levels, to complement other funding mechanisms, such as the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery of the World Bank. The ISDR secretariat, considering its substantially increased responsibilities linked to the ISDR system, requires more predictable, long-term funding, with equitable burden-sharing among donors that supplements a contribution from the UN Regular Budget, in order to identify the ISDR as a central essential programme of the United Nations Secretariat.

In order to support the mobilization of resources for disaster risk reduction world-wide, the ISDR secretariat will set up a disaster reduction resource tracking system to monitor and publish reports on funding flows.

4.9 Governance of the ISDR system

The UN General Assembly, through its Second Committee, remains the principal decision-making body for intergovernmental governance of the ISDR system, including endorsement of policies related to disaster risk reduction. There is thus no change expected in the governance of the ISDR.

Currently ECOSOC does not have disaster risk reduction in its agenda. ECOSOC represents however, a privileged inter-governmental forum, which could provide guidance on policies, strategies and actions *required by the Hyogo Framework*²⁶.

²⁶ Resolutions taken by ECOSOC on matters pertaining to ISDR can be instrumental for decision-making by the UN General Assembly. Therefore it is important that ECOSOC be further engaged and that disaster reduction be included in both its general coordination and humanitarian agendas. Additionally, specific side events on disaster risk reduction and the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action should be also organized during ECOSOC.

ACRONYMS

ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
GP/DRR	Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
IATF/DR	Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction
IDNDR	International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1990-1999)
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
MOB	Management Oversight Board
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PAC	Programme Advisory Committee
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USG	Under-Secretary-General
WCDR	World Conference on Disaster Reduction
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development