SUMMARY OF THE NORTH AMERICAN WORKSHOP ON THE MID-TERM REVIEW:
NORTH AMERICAN WORKSHOP ON THE MID-TERM REVIEW,
WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES

Date: 3 November 2010

Overview. Representatives of the Canadian, Mexican, and United States National Platforms for the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) met on 3 November 2010, joined by civil society stakeholders from each country. The meeting, held at the U.S. National Science Foundation in Arlington, Virginia, U.S.A., focused on progress, success strategies, and barriers with respect to implementation of the disaster risk reduction principles and goals of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). The workshop participants also discussed opportunities for cross-border collaboration, efforts beyond North America, and strategies to reduce urban disaster risk.

Framework for Discussion. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Assistant Secretary-General for the United National International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Margareta Wahlström, delivered the workshop's keynote presentation, speaking about the challenges and opportunities for addressing disaster risk reduction. Among the important messages she touched upon was that private enterprise constitutes approximately eighty percent of national economic activity throughout the world, and therefore achieving the goal of reducing risk depends critically on the ability to effectively promote and advance the adoption of disaster risk reduction practices by the private sector. During ensuing discussions, the Assistant Secretary-General also stressed that while a focus on individual citizen responsibility for disaster preparedness and safety was important to reducing risk, the ISDR had observed a tendency of national governments to charge individuals and localities with the responsibility for reducing disaster risk while not providing sufficient funding and resources to make such a strategy effective. She asked representatives of the attending National Platforms to share ideas on how to allocate funding and resources to localities for better results.

Senior Coordinator for Mid-Term Review of the Hyogo Framework for Action, Letizia Rossano, provided an overview of the HFA mid-term review process, including the review's timeframe, methodology, in-depth studies, focus on existing literature, and organization of regional workshops. She explained that the ISDR hoped to gather the insights of the workshop participants into:

- How the Hyogo Framework had contributed to disaster risk reduction in the represented countries;
- What non-financial issues were the most significant barriers to advancing disaster risk reduction in each country;
- What important elements—such as internal coordination mechanisms, international cooperation, trans-boundary cooperation, local-level implementation, and multi-hazard assessments—should be strengthened in each country to accelerate disaster risk reduction; and,
- How successful disaster risk reduction efforts had been achieved in each country, with a focus on the actual processes and practices that drove the success.

Canadian National Platform Presentation. After more than a year of planning, on 26 October 2010, Canada launched its National Platform for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. The Canadian National Platform presentation was delivered by Public Safety Canada's Director for Emergency Management Policy, Jacqueline Randall.

Since 2005, Canada overall has made significant progress in terms of responding to the five priority areas of the Hyogo Framework. Canada's Emergency Management Act, which took effect in 2007, serves as the foundation for how the federal government works with the provinces, territories, and the private sector. The Act modernized the way Canada addresses emergency management by allowing Public Safety Canada to take a leadership role in articulating how emergency management is instituted in the country. Important programs and initiatives implemented over the past few years include Canada's National Mitigation Strategy, the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements program, the Critical Infrastructure Strategy and Action Plan, Canada's 72-Hour Campaign focused on individual emergency preparedness, establishment of a National Platform, and a Government Operations Centre to provide 24/7 emergency and disaster management support at the strategic level. The Canadian National Platform has identified three main barriers that the country faces in its disaster risk reduction efforts. The first barrier is the difficulty of understanding and addressing environmental change and achieving sustainability. The platform is cognizant of the fact that Canada faces environmental issues exceeding the scope of climate change and therefore prefers to address issues like interdependencies of critical infrastructure and urbanization within the broader environmental paradigm. The second barrier is the difficulty of enabling horizontal collaboration across multiple jurisdictions and sectors. Third, the Canadian public's expectations for disaster risk reduction are high, especially given the country's limited resources. Citizens tend to expect an immediate, seamless response every time, which is not realistic despite best efforts and maximization of available resources. Canada is therefore trying to balance these high expectations against what is realistic.

Mexican National Platform Presentation. The Mexican National Platform presentation was delivered by Jose Quijano Torres, Deputy General Director of Mexico's National Fund for Disasters. A complementary case study was presented by civil society representative Patricia de Jesus Alarcon Chaires of the Institute for Risk Management. Mexico's National Civil Protection, the entity principally responsible for disaster reduction efforts in the country, was established in 1986 in response to the major earthquake disaster in Mexico City during the preceding year.

The Hyogo Framework for Action has helped to focus Mexican national attention on the challenges of reducing disaster risk and impacts. National legislation to enhance protection of the public is currently in its final stages following a two-year period spent gathering information and ideas from the private and public sectors. The HFA has lent strength to efforts to address climate and environmental change, such as fostering coordination in the study of coastal and marine ecological systems. Also paralleling the priorities of the HFA, plans to protect families and make municipalities safer from disasters have been established. Additionally, Mexico has seen shortened response times due to establishment of early warning systems, improved resources for response units, and training of the general population and government officials.

The disaster risk in Mexico is substantial. Disaster response and emergency management efforts in Mexico have been addressed this year with the expenditure of 18 billion pesos, making 2010 the country's most expensive year on record in terms of disaster impacts. Regarding the main obstacles to further reducing Mexico's disaster risk, the national system, while drawing upon the best aspects from several organizations, tends to dilute responsibility. A second obstacle is the difficulty of convincing the population to invest in its own protection; overcoming public reluctance to take action is in part a cultural challenge. A third obstacle is the escalation of legal issues and lawsuits that serve to hamstring progress on reducing risk. A fourth obstacle is the cultural challenge of convincing decision makers and the public to invest in risk reduction projects when the risk at hand is perhaps not easily discernable to those outside the hazards and disaster reduction community.

U.S. National Platform Presentation. The U.S. National Platform presentation was delivered by David Applegate of the U.S. Geological Survey, who serves as Chair of the U.S. National Science and Technology Council's interagency Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction (SDR). The subcommittee is the federal government entity that constitutes the U.S. National Platform. The subcommittee is

composed of federal agencies involved in the science and engineering aspects of disaster risk reduction as well as many of the key implementing agencies. This construct is crucial for enabling coordination and communication among various agencies with separate but often overlapping missions for disaster risk reduction. To achieve a more multi-sectoral approach, the subcommittee works in partnership with the National Academies Disasters Roundtable and is seeking to involve other non-governmental organizations.

The U.S. effort to build a framework for disaster risk reduction very much parallels and draws continued inspiration from the principles of the Hyogo Framework. The U.S. framework, known as the *Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction*, is the country's ten-year strategy for promoting and applying science and engineering to enable more resilient communities. The U.S. is driving towards the following outcomes:

- Relevant hazards are recognized and understood
- Communities at risk know when a hazard even is imminent
- Property losses and lives at risk in future natural hazard events are minimized
- Disaster-resilient communities experience minimum disruption to life and economy after a hazard
  event has passed

Along the path to achieving these outcomes lie what the strategy refers to as the six Grand Challenges, which in turn represent both obstacles to be overcome as well as opportunities for success. The first of these challenges is providing disaster information where and when it is needed, not only what is needed during and after a disaster crisis, but also beforehand. The second challenge is to understand the natural processes that communities face, including the affect of climate change on natural hazards. There is high-level recognition in the U.S. government that as it moves forward with climate change adaptation measures, there is a need to harness the efforts that are already underway in the disaster risk reduction community as a key component of adaptation. The third challenge is mitigating hazard impacts and disasters. While mitigation is a key to success, the difficulty of implementing mitigation measures, often because effective incentives are not in place, represents a significant barrier. The fourth challenge is to recognize and reduce vulnerability of interdependent critical infrastructure, which is going to be one of the determining factors of how quickly communities are able to recover following an event. There is much work that the U.S. still needs to do in this arena. The fifth challenge is developing standardized methods through which communities can understand the full spectrum of the hazards that they face as well as their vulnerability to those hazards. The sixth and last challenge, which links directly to the Hyogo Framework, is promoting risk-wise behavior. And indeed this is the linchpin of disaster risk reduction. Meeting that challenge will require making the hazard real enough to convince individuals that they need to take risk-reducing actions.

Group Discussions on the HFA Review's Key Questions. To provide insight and expertise on the how well their respective countries have implemented the disaster risk reduction principles and goals of the Hyogo Framework, the workshop participants divided into groups that were each charged with answering one of the following key questions along with corresponding sub-questions (not listed):

- **Key Question 5:** In your experience is there in country X/region Y a culture of safety and resilience at the level of the general public?
- **Key Question 6:** How can implementation of HFA Priority Action 4, reducing the underlying risk factors, be strengthened?
- **Key Question 8:** How should climate change adaptation be integrated in the next five years of the HFA implementation?

Led by SDR Vice-Chair Dennis Wenger of the U.S. National Science Foundation, the first group discussed key question 5. The group concluded that while there are some communities and "sub-

cultures" in each country which possess strong notions of safety and resilience, the overall level of preparedness, safety and resilience culture is lacking in each country. The group identified four tools and approaches that it felt held the most promise for strengthening cultures of safety and resilience. The tools and approaches identified were:

- School education programs for disaster risk reduction and preparedness;
- Increasing public-private partnerships to reach across sectors;
- Better engagement with the media, not only so that the media does not perpetuate myths, but also to encourage the media to be a positive force in advancing a culture of safety and preparedness; and,
- Risk-reduction campaigns and programs that stress family preparedness.

The second group, led by Jose Quijano Torres, Deputy General Director of Mexico's National Fund for Disasters, discussed key question 6. Representatives of the three countries agreed that the basic and critical determinant for reducing underlying risk factors is education. A pillar of this discussion was therefore how to make the population understand the importance of education and focus on the younger generation. Another important topic in the discussion was that each of the countries is different. In some the focus is more on urban issues, while in others the most important priority is the rural sector. What the participants agreed on is that education and training had to go hand-in-hand with the culture of each country. A third element was that policy documents, strategies, and plans must be translated into implementation, programs, and above all budgeting in order to promote regulation of appropriate use of land and natural resources. Furthermore, the participants agreed that actions by all sectors of society must be taken in parallel.

Sarah Stewart Johnson of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy led the third group's discussion on key question 9 regarding how climate change adaptation can be integrated into disaster risk reduction. The group discussed policy and programmatic linkages that have proven helpful in the past. Among the linkages cited were:

- Successful relationships built by the U.S. National Academies Disasters Roundtable with organizations developing climate change adaptation programs;
- Funding arrangements linking scientists with community-based organizations such as local public health departments; and,
- Using legislation to incorporate climate change adaptation into a broader multi-hazards framework.

The group also discussed ideas for institutional arrangements to integrate climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, including: holding professional schools and universities more responsible for educating the future leaders who will deal with disasters in a changing climate; creating stable streams of funding for applied and operational research that integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, and requiring multilateral funding to be conditional on the incorporation of disaster risk reduction and a "climate smart lens."

The group further concluded that institutions need to improve the links between academics, policy makers, and local communities with scientists to effectively respond to the challenges of disaster risk reduction in a changing climate.

Presentation on Haiti's Recovery. Reginald DesRoches, Chair and Associate Professor of the Georgia Institute of Technology's School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, delivered a presentation about the lessons learned from the 2010 Haiti earthquake and the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for enabling a resilient, sustainable Haiti. Among his concluding remarks, Dr. DesRoches stressed that risk reduction must become a priority in Haiti and linked to poverty reduction and sustainable development. Progress in these areas will require involvement from the public and private sectors, engagement by the education system, capacity building at every level, and participation from both individuals and communities. Knowing where structures and especially critical

infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, can be located to minimize risk, requires multi-hazard and community-based risk maps. While use of the latest technologies and science-based evidence is needed to identify, assess, and reduce risks, there is also a need to leverage local resources, such as cell phone networks, local media, and local supplies of building materials. Preparedness through evacuation drills and education at all levels will save lives and reduce the impact from future events. In turn, progress in preparedness will require coordination between nongovernmental organizations, the Government of Haiti, and communities.

Group Discussions on International, Cross-Border, and Urban Issues. Rod Snider of the American Red Cross led a group discussion on efforts to reduce disaster risk abroad. The discussion produced the following recommendations:

- Develop a methodology to evaluate disaster risk reduction processes and successes to share with neighbors in North America
- Allocate funding for layered risk maps
- Implement a disaster risk reduction strategy for health
- Create coordinating mechanisms for disaster risk reduction resources

Nicholas Suntzeff of the U.S. Department of State led a group discussion on opportunities for cross-border collaboration. The discussion produced the following recommendations:

- Use existing bi- and tri-lateral forums and efforts, such as emergency response exercises, as platforms for introducing and strengthening coordination on cross-border disaster risk reduction initiatives
- Perform an inventory of cross-border activities in the region and link together the good work that is already being done
- Use the U.S.-Mexico Good Neighbor Environmental Board as a forum for continuing a dialogue on disaster risk reduction
- Hold a regional workshop to develop qualitative and quantitative indicators and a framework for management of disasters
- Determine whether responders of Mexico, Canada, and the U.S. are familiar with the cross-border arrangements that already exist and, if not, develop a way to address this knowledge gap

Lauren Alexander Augustine of the U.S. National Academies Disasters Roundtable led a group discussion on urban disasters in the international context. The discussion produced the following points and recommendations:

- Consider issues in the global context; lessons can be shared city-to-city
- Engage mayors since real impact happens at the urban level or even below
- Address high urban risk in the U.S., including the dependence on the centralized utilities and services that makes many U.S urban communities less resilient in comparison to rural counterparts
- Improve communication of urban risk by appropriately framing the learning environment for the targeted audience
- Further develop urban partnerships, such as bringing together professionals to share experiences and best practices on the topic of earthquakes

Concluding Remarks and Next Steps. Among the important themes that surfaced repeatedly during the day of discussions was the need for all countries to improve public understanding of hazard risk and disaster risk reduction, particularly through school programs and by effectively tailoring risk reduction messages to intended audiences. Moreover, institutions of higher education have both an opportunity and the responsibility to equip future leaders with the knowledge base to meet the challenges of mitigating hazard impacts in a changing climate and environment. Stable streams of funding for applied and operational research that integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change

adaptation are also needed to address this challenge. Another theme to emerge was the importance of using public-private partnerships to spread a culture of disaster risk reduction to the private sector to bolster economic resilience after hazard impacts.

During the workshop several ideas for cross-border collaboration and coordination emerged. It was proposed that any such efforts jointly undertaken by the National Platforms of Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. should initially seek to link and build upon existing initiatives between the countries. Representatives from Mexico's National Platform invited their counterparts from Canada and the U.S. to continue the dialogue at the North American Regional Platform meeting, scheduled to be held in Mexico in the spring of 2011.

Participants:

Allen Dearry	U.S. National Institutes of Health
Amy Mintz	American Red Cross
Andrew Bruzewicz	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Antonio Díaz de León Corral	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
Barbara Haines-Parmele	U.S. Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction Secretariat
Bret Schothorst	U.S. Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction Secretariat
Brian Lieke	U.S. Department of State
Candace Owens	U.S. National Science Foundation
Christy Crosiar	U.S. National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency
Cyril Dupre	Friends of ACTED
Darlene Sparks Washington	DSW Consulting, LLC
David Applegate	U.S. Geological Survey
Dennis Wenger	U.S. National Science Foundation
Dimitra Syriopoulou	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Gail Neudorf	Canadian Red Cross
Gregory Ross Faith	U.S. Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction Secretariat
Gustavo Delgado	U.S. Department of State
Jacqueline Randall	Public Safety Canada
James Phillip Thompson	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Jeanne-Aimee De Marrais	Save the Children
Joan Pope	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
John Harrald	Virginia Polytecnic Institute and State University
José Quijano Torres	Mexican National Fund for Disasters
Judy Blanchette	Habitat for Humanity International
Kathryn Wade	American Red Cross
Kimberly Hayward	U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency
Lauren Alexander Augustine	U.S. National Academies
Letizia Rossano	UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
Liliana López Ortíz	Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Lluvia Cervantes del Toro	Mexican Civil Protection
Manuel A. Prado	Interpreter
Marcy Rockman	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Margareta Wahlström	UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
Mark Keim	U.S. Centers for Disease Control
Michael Grimm	U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency
Nicholas Suntzeff	U.S. Department of State
Patricia Alarcón Chaires	Institute for Risk Management
Raúl Cantón Lara	National Organization of Specialists in Security and Civil Protection
Reginald DesRoches	Georgia Institute of Technology
Robert O'Connor	U.S. National Science Foundation
Rod Snider	American Red Cross
Roger Pierce	U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Ron Eguchi	ImageCat, Inc.
Rosa Patricia Stephenson	Interpreter
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Sarah Stewart Johnson	White House Office of Science and Technology Policy
Sezin Tokar	U.S. Agency for International Development
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