

THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

National Summary Report

IDNDR

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SECTION A: PROFILE

I.Composition of Focal Point

Public services:

- Civil Defence Centre (I)
- Hydrometeorological Agency (I)

2.Internal organization of the Focal Point

The above two institutions are involved in conducting their functions in accordance with relevant legislation on natural disasters

3. Prevailing hazards

Type	Location	Affected population
a) Floods	Jekabpils, some other towns on Daugava, Gauja, Ogre rivers	15 600
b) Wind storms	Throughout all the territory of Latvia	-
c) Drifting snow, drifting ice	"-	-
d) Forest fires	"-	-

4. Recent natural disasters

Type	Location	Affected Population	Losses (USD)
a) Drifting ice Nov., 1993	Kraslava district	39 000	36 000
b) Forest fires July-Aug., 1992	surroundings of Riga, Northern Kurzeme	No data available	107 000
c) Floods Jan. and March 1991	Jekabpils	4 000	7 000

5. National socio-economic conditions

- Population	2.67 milliones (1992)
- GNP	220.5 milliones USD (1991)
- Per-Capita Income	No data available

6. Availability of assistance to other countries in the field of natural disaster reduction

Assistance to victims can be provided from state reserves of food-stuffs and medical supplies, as well as by sending out emergency medical teams and by providing expertise in the field of hydrometeorology and environment protection

7. International assistance required for natural disaster reduction

We have had no experience so far but it would seem desirable to start exchange of information and to study the latest experience accumulated in the field of natural disaster reduction

SECTION B: STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

I. Steps towards achieving the 3 main Decade targets

a) Comprehensive national assessments of risks from natural hazards, with these assessments taken into account in development plans

- no assessment of risks from natural hazards has been made; there is, however, inclusion of awareness, preparedness and response measures in the emergency plans of relevant institutions and services in case of natural disasters

b) Mitigation plans at national and/or local levels, involving long-term prevention and preparedness and community awareness

- mitigation plans of natural disasters are a part of general emergency (civil protection) plans of local authorities which give an outline of most likely natural disasters, forecast of losses and damage as well as which envisages planning of response and mitigation measures. A plan usually covers a period of one year, while a long-term prevention is devised for the areas affected by floods.

At national level, data of local institutions are summarized as well as funding from state budget is planned and cooperation between state and local authorities is coordinated

c) Ready access to global, regional, national and local warning systems and broad dissemination of warnings

- The access to international communications network via the Hydrometeorological Agency is employed. Warning of population is done using the civil defence warning system through its own media

2. Present national plan for natural disaster reduction

Latvia does not have an overall natural disaster reduction plan since these occur seldom posing less threat to population than that caused by technological accidents. It is intended to plan the measures of natural disaster reduction within the framework of the overall civil defence plan

3. Legislation introduced and enacted in relation to natural disaster reduction

The following have been developed:

- law on civil defence
- law on the environmental protection
- hydrometeorology board regulations

4. Disaster mitigation activities completed or underway

The above projects have not been developed and are not planned to be considered

5. Plans to fulfill Decade targets by the end of 1999

There exists no specific plan

SECTION C: INTERACTIONS

I. Publications on IDNDR-related subject

There are no publications on the IDNDR-related subjects and these are not considered to be developed

2. IDNDR meetings and conferences held or planned

There have been none so far and it is not intended to hold any in the near future

3. Current or planned partnerships and cooperation related to IDNDR with other countries

There is a cooperation project with Sweden in order to establish a rescue service which would focus on providing training and assistance in elimination of natural disasters in Latvia. It is also intended to specify such cooperation in draft agreements with Russia, Byelorussia, Germany, Lithuania and Estonia in case of natural disasters and industrial accidents. During the 1992 forest fires in Latvia we received aid from Sweden, Finland and Germany who provided helicopters, communications means and consultations

SECTION D: EVALUATION

I. Overall evaluation of national disaster mitigation programmes including, but not limited to, those initiated after IDNDR and achievements up to now

- As seen from the comments presented here, no natural disaster programmes have been developed due to two main reasons:

(i) natural disasters in this country do not normally involve heavy losses of life and property damage;

(ii) Latvia was able to join international community only after regaining its independence in May, 1991. The initial contacts and exchange of information in the field of cooperation on civilian protection started only in 1993. There is a number of natural disasters typical to Latvia and these include wind storms, floods, snow drifts and forest fires; the relevant response measures have been included in the overall emergency plans.

Joining the IDNDR would certainly add to the efficiency of the above measures and their planning as well as widening the Focal Point by involving representatives of other administrative and academic and research institutions

2. Review of the IDNDR

The IDNDR activities have been greatly appreciated by the Civil Defence Centre of Latvia, the Hydrometeorological Agency and other relevant institutions. Obtaining of information from the journals (newsletters) "Stop Disasters", other periodicals (from these "Disasters" is available in Latvia) as well as conference and workshop proceedings allows to implement the latest achievements of other countries in our work. We would like to obtain more information via the IDNDR on how natural disaster mitigation programmes are devised in the countries with similar climatic and economic situation (Europe, North America). We would highly welcome the development of such regional programmes and would like to join them. We would also be grateful to receive information concerning the IDNDR activities, in particular if these comprise any specific proposals or recommendations