

ASSESSMENT OF ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE DECADE

Information on Provider

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Experience and Recent Disasters

1. Please provide a list of major disasters your country has experienced during the past five-5 years.

The major disasters our country has experienced during the past five years are:

- a. The floods in the regions of the cities of Plovdiv and Haskovo, which occurred in December 1996
- b. The floods in the regions of the cities of Varna and Sofia, which occurred in February 1998 and in the region of Plovdiv in May 1998
- c. The landslides at the Black Sea coast and other country regions, which occurred during the past two years

2. What was the impact of the above listed disasters?

The impact of the above listed disasters was, as follows:

- House buildings damaged (flooded, ruined)
- Bridges ruined
- Road surfaces damaged
- Communication system failure
- Power and water supply systems disrupted
- Private and public property losses

3. Which measures were taken to reduce the impact of the disaster?

The following measures were taken to reduce the impact of the disaster:

- Financial resources were allocated from the Ministerial Council's *Permanent Commission for Population Protection (PCPP) in case of Disasters and Emergencies* to the affected regions
- Emergency plans for conducting of Rescue and Urgent Emergency Relief Works at national, regional and local level were corrected and actualised
- "Rules of organisation and activity on disasters, emergencies and catastrophes prevention and liquidation" were developed and promulgated by Decree № 18 of the Ministerial Council of Republic of Bulgaria on January, 23 1998

4. Do you believe there can be improvements in preparing for natural hazards in your country and in preventing negative impacts of such hazards? What sort of improvements?

Yes, there can be improvements. They can be made with the implementation of the following measures:

- Improving the interacting and co-ordination between national and local authorities, governmental and non-governmental organisations in the process of Civil Emergency Planning and Management
- Improving the legal basis and setting it into accordance with the European requirements and international legislation
- Involving private sector and insurance companies in the process of prevention activities
- Improving technical and rescue equipment, as well as the professional abilities of the rescue units
- Improving population education in disaster prevention activities
- More intensive use of communication and information systems and media, aiming to focus more public attention on the problems of disaster prevention and mitigation

5. Do you believe the IDNDR helped your country to give greater attention to disaster reduction?

Yes, we do believe.

- A National program for Natural Disaster Reduction was developed in accordance with the principles and strategy of IDNDR
- The PCPP, as a senior governmental body, is designated for a National IDNDR Committee

During
Legislation

6. Please, provide an example(s) an achievement(s) incorporating successful preventive approaches, which you consider a "success story".

- In July 1996 a Prevention Activities Program was developed and adopted by resolution of the PCPP
- Sofia is a member city of the Risk Assessment Tools for Diagnosis of Urban Areas against Seismic Disasters (RADIUS) project. As a member of this project, our city is participating in "Understanding Urban Seismic Risk Around the World" comparative study
- There is established an Associate European Centre for Risk Prevention Training at School Level - Sofia, Bulgaria within the framework of the Open Partial EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement of the Council of Europe

Progress made, since the inception of IDNDR, in the field of disaster reduction as a component of development planning and risk management.

1. Please provide a brief statement of national accomplishment and/or describe current activities related to the achievement of the IDNDR Programme Targets:

(a) Comprehensive national assessment of risks. If an assessment exists, is it published or codified?

Integral criteria and methodologies for risk assessment are foreseen in the adopted Prevention Activities Program to be worked out for the appropriate categories:

- Potentially dangerous objects of the national economy of Republic of Bulgaria
- Potentially dangerous areas of the territory of Republic of Bulgaria, periodically impacted from natural disasters
- Assessment of the vulnerabilities of the infrastructures, buildings and population on its social-economical characteristics (factors, indexes)
- Working out of an integrated national risk assessment and procedures for emergency planning and management

(b) Structured mitigation plans. Do documented comprehensive national disaster management plans exist?

There is developed a National Plan for conducting of Rescue and Urgent Emergency Relief Works in case of Disasters, Emergencies and Catastrophes. Similar plans are developed at the Ministries, regions, communities and objects of the national economy.

(c) Ready access to global, regional, national and local early warning systems. Can you provide examples of early warning practices and demonstrated successes?

We can provide the following examples:

- System for early warning about pollution down the river of Danube - the "Danube program" (PHARE)
- National automated system for continuous control of the background gamma radiation in Bulgaria. For example, the system worked after the recent accident in Spain, and it did not read contaminating radioactivity
- Radiation Monitoring System of the 12-kilometers area of the Nuclear Electric Power Station - Kozlodui
- Chemical System for Control of and Warning for Atmospheric Emissions, made from the big industrial objects

2. What obstacles do you face which prevent the accomplishment of the Decade targets? What are your recommendations to best overcome these obstacles?

Some obstacles, which prevent the accomplishment of the Decade targets, are:

1. Financing the National IDNDR Program activities (the financial management of our country is under the authority of a Currency Board).
2. Harmonising the national legislation with the international legislation in the field of population protection and assistance in case of natural disaster.

Recommendations:

Working out of normative acts, adopting and execution of the government resolutions for improving Emergency Prevention and Management Activities.

3. To what extent have you established and implemented educational and information programmes aimed at generating public awareness? What methods of information dissemination have been utilised?

- 1) An amendment to the Public Education Act was adopted in March 1998 - A Public Educational Requirement for students' safe education, teaching and working conditions. On this Requirement the Ministry of Education and Science has developed a new educational program for students training how to act in case of Disasters, Emergencies and Catastrophes.

- 2) A new educational discipline was adopted at the High Schools - "Protection in case of disasters".

3) There is established an Associate European Centre for Risk Prevention Training at School Level (CSLT) - Sofia, Bulgaria.

4) Twenty-eight centres for population education in the field of civil protection are functioning in the country, based on a territorial-administrative principle.

5) Public information activities:

- A "Call" magazine is periodically issued. The problems with natural disaster are being treated in it. Also the IDNDR events and activities are being reflected in this magazine.

- Informative and educational broadcasts on population protection and behaviour in case of a natural disaster are being disseminated through the media.

- The cases of natural, technological and ecological disasters are being reflected through the media in prior.

4. Have you liaised with policy makers and major groups, such as local authorities, NGOs, and the media, in order to ensure support for and effectiveness of disaster reduction programmes? Please describe your activities.

Yes, we have.

The support for disaster reduction programmes is carried out from public administration personnel and personnel of the local authorities, engaged with the problems of population protection against natural disasters and emergencies. The Centre of the National IDNDR Committee - Civil Protection of the Republic of Bulgaria relies on their contribution, as it commits them to take a part in workshops, conferences, seminars, projects etc. at national and regional level, as:

- An international conference "Risk science" - March 1997
- An workshop on floods prevention - September 1997
- A national conference on protection against disasters, emergencies and catastrophes - November 1997
- An workshop on landslides prevention - April 1997
- Our country has joined the international RADIUS project
- There is established a journalistic club "Protection". Seminars with the participation of journalists are convened every year
- Organising national exercises for protection against disasters with the participation of governmental and non governmental organisations

5. To what extent have you worked with other sectors in incorporating disaster reduction activities into their planning (i.e. Insurance, banking, private sector and development agencies)?

We work with the bigger insurance companies and the Bulgarian National Bank. The private sector is committed in planning and conducting of disaster reduction activities. Our joint activities with the development agencies are directed to developing and realising education projects and methodological and technical assistance in emergency management.

6. The Decade provides an international arena for information exchange as well as an extensive international network of partners, how have these inputs contributed to achieving the goals of the Decade?

- In 1994 Bulgaria has taken a part in the IDNDR Yokohama World Conference. In consequence of that participation, the level of international information exchange with the IDNDR Secretariat and the other IDNDR countries has increased.

- An international conference for risk prevention training at school level as an IDNDR initiative was convened from 20 to 22 of March 1997 in Sofia.

- Bulgarian representatives have participated in two international seminars dedicated to the RADIUS project and convened in Japan in 1998, May and June.

- Participation in an Internet-forum for a seismic information exchange as an implementation of the comparative study "Understanding Seismic Risk around the World" initiated as a part of the RADIUS project.

These activities helped for understanding the actuality of emergency assessment and management problem. We have made closer contacts and our co-operation with partners from other countries has become deeper. We have acquired new knowledge and experience in the practical measures on risk assessment and management. We have turned our attention to improving of the legal basis.

Structures in Place

1. Is there a designated government authority for disaster reduction activities? If yes, is this authority's commitment to prevention embodied in the government structure, priorities, budget and legislation?

Yes, there is a designated government authority for disaster reduction activities the Ministerial Council's *Permanent Commission for Population Protection (PCPP) in case of Disasters and Emergencies* and it's commitment is embodied in the government structure, priorities, budget and legislation. Civil Protection of the Republic of Bulgaria is the executive body of the PCPP, and that body plans and manages the emergency activities.

2. Have budget lines for disaster reduction and preventive activities been made available in your government's budget?

Yes, budget lines for disaster reduction and preventive activities have been made available in our government's budget.

3. Have legislative authorities (national, state or local level) established legal frameworks for the implementation of disaster mitigation measures (i.e. land-use planning, water and forest management, building codes)?

Yes, there are established such legal frameworks.

4. Have academic institutions and professional schools in disciplines such as engineering, agriculture, architecture, urban planning, business or public administration incorporated in their curricula applicable disaster-reduction concepts and measures? Please provide examples.

Yes, academic institutions and professional schools have incorporated in their curricula applicable disaster-reduction concepts and measures. (Examples: the following new educational disciplines were adopted: "Protection in case of disasters", "Safety and security of the labour", "Emergency management" etc.). A Bulgarian scientist, working at the Geographic Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Science, has developed and defended a doctorate in the field of risk assessment and management.

5. Have networks been built in order to aid in the transfer and application of existing knowledge and technology, information dissemination and international collaboration? Please briefly describe.

Yes, IDNDR contributed to the building and supporting of networks in order to aid in the transfer and information and new knowledge exchange in the field of crisis situation prevention and management. For example:

- The exchange of seismic information between the cities, participating in the RADIUS project;
- The participation in international conferences, seminars and workshops on natural disasters reduction and emergency management.

6. Who are your principal working partners? Do they represent an interdisciplinary approach to disaster reduction?

Our principal partners are:

- IDNDR Secretariat;

- National IDNDR committees of the other countries;
- Scientific organisations and institutions at international and national level;
- Governmental and local authorities;
- Non-governmental organisations.

They represent an interdisciplinary approach to disaster reduction.

Future requirements

Given your experience since the inception of the Decade and the new challenges of disasters in the 21st century, please provide comments as to what you believe are the necessary future requirements needed to successfully carry disaster reduction activities into the 21st century. Listed below are some criteria for your consideration:

- International mechanism for co-ordination
- Budgetary commitments
- Policy commitment
- Network building
- Information dissemination
- Communication tools
- Local authorities
- Links to economic and social development programmes, environmental protection and sustainable development

For a country such as Bulgaria, which is in a transitional period, each one of the above mentioned criteria would have an overall positive effect on the future activities in the field of disaster reduction. The Parliament and the Government of our country have definite budgetary commitments to these activities. They make efforts to extend their capabilities by looking for an external financial support in the implementation of economic, social and ecological development programmes.

2. What sort of national or international measures would you like to be put in place in the 21st century?

The occurred natural disasters during the last decade of our century have induced a wide public interest in that, to what extent each country is ready to face a disaster and what measures have to be taken, when such a disaster occurs. In that connection IDNDR plays an essential role in contributing population to clearly understand the characteristic risks for the country and to become aware of the measures, which the national and local authorities take to protect it. We consider it should be find the right form of these IDNDR activities to be continued in the next century.

We lay emphasis on the following future national and international activities:

- Development and implementation of joint international projects in the field of disaster reduction;
- Building a network, designed for specialised exchange of operational information to render assistance, when a disaster occurs.

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