



United Nations – Nations Unies

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction – Stratégie internationale pour la prévention des catastrophes

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ISDR Press Release 2003/01  
22 March 2003

## The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Celebrates World Water Day 2003

*Turning the tide on disasters towards sustainable development*

At any time throughout the world a river somewhere is in flood and its waters are threatening communities, their properties and even their lives. At the other end of this extreme water overload are droughts that have been and are still occurring around the world at the same time. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) is highlighting the importance of measures taken to reduce the impacts of disasters in its session at the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum: *Living with Risk – towards effective disaster reduction*.

“Today, hydrometeorological hazards are having a greater impact due to human activities that increase vulnerability, interfering more than ever with the natural surroundings that make our world a liveable home,” said Salvano Briceño, Director of the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the ISDR (UN/ISDR). “This is precisely the reason why sustainable development must take into account the risk of natural hazards and their impacts in order for its success.”

Water related disasters – too much or too little water – hold major consequences for the well being of countries in the social, economic, environmental and humanitarian sectors. It is a fact that they are predicted to increase both in frequency and intensity due to climate change, environmental degradation, and phenomena such as the El Niño Southern Oscillation, affecting the patterns and intensity of natural hazards including floods, droughts, tropical cyclones, hurricanes and typhoons.

The theme of World Water Day 2003 – *Water for the Future* – is particularly relevant for the process of building disaster resilient communities through preparedness, mitigation and prevention measures. By adopting policies that take into consideration risk and vulnerabilities, we enable a more sustainable planet for future generations.

### **2003 World Disaster Reduction Campaign**

This year’s annual World Disaster Reduction Campaign organized by the UN/ISDR will focus on the theme *Living with Risk – Turning the tide on disasters towards sustainable development*. The Campaign will review the numerous issues associated with water related disasters and in particular with strategies and measures aiming at reducing their impact, culminating on the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction, which falls on Wednesday 8 October 2003. Its aim is to increase public awareness of, and participation in measures that can be taken to reduce the risk and vulnerabilities of communities to the negative impacts of natural hazards.

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#### **For more information or interviews, please contact:**

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