

PRESS RELEASE

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Living with Risk

A hundred positive examples of how people are making the world safer

The Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) will be launching its 2004 version of "Living with Risk: A global review of disaster reduction initiatives" on 14 July in New York. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland will present this new publication, coinciding with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Drawn from studies commissioned by UN/ISDR and activities carried out by regional partner organizations, with inputs from various UN organizations, national governments and specialized institutions, the global review is an indispensable guide and a key reference document for all those interested in disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and sustainable development. It directly complements the UNDP report "Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge for Development" launched in early 2004, with future versions planned to be jointly produced by both organizations.

In 2003 alone, over 70,000 people perished in some 700 disasters that affected 600 million men, women and children and caused US\$ 65 billion in damages. Global trends show that disasters will increase because of human activities and more people – in particular the poor – will be affected as they grow more vulnerable. Over three-quarters of the 100 largest cities in the world are situated in locations exposed to potential serious natural hazards.

"Living with Risk" explores the ways in which the understanding of disaster management and risk have evolved over recent years and provides a comprehensive compilation of initiatives and reference information on disaster risks around the world.

"The report gives more than a hundred positive examples of how countries such as Costa Rica, India, South Africa, Pacific island states, Canada, Vietnam, Japan, the United States, Australia manage the challenge of living with natural hazards. A natural hazard is only a disaster because people find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time," explained Sálvamo Briceño, Director of the ISDR Secretariat in Geneva. "There are many ways to make the world safer if we learn to be less vulnerable."

Many of the issues outlined in "Living with Risk" will be addressed at the forthcoming World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Hyogo (Japan) in January 2005.

On-line extracts of "Living with Risk: A global review of disaster reduction initiatives"
available on the ISDR website www.unisdr.org
(direct link: http://www.unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/bd-lwr-2004-eng.htm)

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