



World Conference on Disaster Reduction

18-22 January 2005, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan

United Nations - Nations Unies

Secretariat for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction – Secrétariat de la Conférence mondiale pour la prévention des catastrophes

UN/ISDR 2004/12

3 December 2004

Disaster reduction on the agenda of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Weather-related hazards have caused two-thirds of all disasters in the last ten years. More than 300 out of the 380 natural hazards recorded in 2003 were related to hydro-meteorological phenomena alone, which affected over 249 million people out of a total of 254 million people affected by natural hazards in the same year.

Disasters triggered by hydro-meteorological hazards are among the most frequent and severe disasters, and will probably remain so in the future if trends are to continue. The severity of the last hurricane season in the Caribbean, which killed more than 2,800 in the region, the unusual and violent typhoon season in Japan and the current storms in the Philippines are just a few examples of what we can expect in the near future.

“The talks that will take place next week in Buenos Aires on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, will be an important step forward,” says Sálvano Briceño, Director of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat. “Delegates and ministers from all over the world will speak about the source of the problem: greenhouse gas emissions. They will also consider for the first time the other side of the issue – how to adapt to and live with the new and increased risks that climate change is likely to bring. Disaster reduction, early warning and preparedness are key tools to coping with weather and climate extremes, now and in the future.”

Within the climate change agenda, the question of disasters is of particular priority as one of the most feared possible outcomes. Yet it is also one of the most complex issues, and its possible consequences are difficult to predict.

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction that will take place in Kobe, Japan on 18-22 January is another opportunity to show how disaster reduction and management can help societies adapt to climate change. “It is clear that many countries and communities are not resilient to the existing natural variability of the climate. Now is the time to integrate emerging trends into disaster management strategies. We should give priority to managing risk now, rather than wait and act only once a disaster strikes,” says Sálvano Briceño.

For more information please contact:

Brigitte Leoni, Media Relations
World Conference on Disaster Reduction
Inter.-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for
Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR)
Tel: + 41 22 917 49 68 / +33 (0) 6 26 37 88 61
E-mail: leonib@un.org