



PRESS RELEASE

UN/ISDR 2005/03
19 January 2005

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Know risk or no risk? UN launches guide on disaster risk reduction

The tragic loss of life and appalling devastation from the Indian Ocean tsunami on 26 December 2004 was a painful reminder of the many vulnerable people threatened by natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, cyclones, landslides and tsunamis. The disaster presented a range of valuable lessons, including the need for people to be aware and take action to reduce disaster risk. A new book launched at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, on 19 January 2005, could help achieve this goal.

Knowing the risks posed to societies from natural hazards is the best way to reduce their impact and to avoid or at least mitigate any future disasters. To help in furthering this objective and to extend the awareness of disaster risk reduction, The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) and the UK-based publisher Tudor Rose have collaborated in a unique public-private partnership to advance their shared commitment to reducing disaster risk through the publication of a landmark book.

Know Risk is a fully illustrated, 376-page hardback book in which over 160 authors describe their work in disaster reduction at international, regional, national, municipal and local levels. Their commentaries draw upon experiences around the world to reflect how people are living with natural and related environmental and technological risks, and how they are making their own efforts to reduce their exposure to disasters. *Know Risk* reflects the progress in this field over the past ten years, highlighting good practices and drawing on the UN/ISDR coordinated review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World (1994). By focusing on the experiences and livelihoods of people in vulnerable human habitats, *Know Risk* emphasises the benefits of experience leading into future actions and institutional commitments to disaster reduction.

In his statement which opens the book, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan writes, "Disaster reduction is a responsibility of all of us. Let us reaffirm our commitment to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and let us bring even more resources – political, technical, and financial – to this vital cause. Together we can protect lives and livelihoods today, and build disaster-resilient communities for tomorrow. In that spirit of partnership, I recommend *Know Risk* to a global audience."

Jan Egeland, Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, United Nations writes: "*Know Risk* will undoubtedly contribute, in a substantive manner, to the body of knowledge in this field. I look forward to its wide dissemination and use by experts and practitioners working for building resilience in disaster-prone communities".

Know Risk can be obtained through the United Nations Publications stand on level 1 of the Portopia Hotel South Wing at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (Kobe, Hyogo, Japan) or through their offices in Geneva and New York (unpubli@unog.ch). The publication is also directly available from Tudor Rose (jon.ingleton@tudor-rose.co.uk).

For more information, please contact:

Nicole Rencoret
Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy
for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR)
Tel: +81 (0)80 1060 4570
Email: rencoret@un.org
www.unisdr.org