

# Disaster reduction in **AFRICA**

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**From the editor**

**“Developmentizing” disaster reduction...**

Sixteen days after the Indian Ocean tsunami, on 11 January 2005, 717 million USD was concretely committed as post-disaster humanitarian assistance. “This has never happened before,” said UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland.

If only such an amount could be made available to disaster reduction worldwide, not in the next 16 days but in the next 16 months... But this is not likely to happen. Disaster reduction does not have the emotional and/or political appeal of a disaster event.

As disaster reduction (DR) is not a disaster event, an “exceptional” event, are we absolutely right to perceive it as a “humanitarian” issue? The truth is DR has more to do with development than with humanitarian issue. This is why DR has remained a lone stranger in the world of humanitarian affairs.

And as long as DR is perceived as a “humanitarian affair”, resources will be allocated on “humanitarian” grounds. Yet, there isn’t much “humanitarian” enthusiasm for a non-thrilling event like reducing disaster risk.

It is true that DR can benefit from humanitarian post-disaster resource allocation. But it is not the only area that may benefit. In fact, the first areas to benefit are development areas like health, sanitation, infrastructure development, etc.

It may also be argued that DR is still a little known subject, and that a humanitarian perspective would help promote it better. The problem is that such a humanitarian perspective does not help to secure stable, predictable and long-term resources. Yet, stable resources are necessary for systematic and sustained awareness and attention promotion.

Shall we blame “disaster politics” for the present situation? Yet, it is also a fact that we, humans, increasingly focus more on the “urgent” than on the “important”?

Meanwhile, Africa seems to have opted gradually for the “important”: Its pace in disaster reduction is more resolute and faster than that of those setting the DR agenda at global level.

But the world being as it is, we should play both cards. We should therefore seek to take the most of the present humanitarian status of disaster reduction.

Former US President Bill Clinton, now the UN Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, on 14 July said: “We cannot let this year pass without some real progress on disaster risk reduction... 2005 is a key year for the risk reduction agenda.”

Why not make use of such a top-level leadership awareness? For instance to turn highly vulnerable Africa’s repeated disaster-caused loss of precarious human lives and livelihoods and hard-won assets and development gains into a major challenge for humanitarian wisdom? Aren’t we facing, on this continent, the “world’s biggest disaster in the making”?

Meanwhile, efforts are being made to mainstream disaster reduction in development. A number of African countries have already incorporated DR into their poverty reduction strategies... with the blessing of some major global financial partners.

This is encouraging. We should move forward quickly in that direction. Indeed, mainstreaming DR in development is, at present, the best option available for “developmentizing” disaster reduction.

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# MOZAMBIQUE: Pilot community project integrating DRM into rural development successful

**Dr Wolfgang Stiebens**

Programme Coordinator,  
GTZ (PRODER),  
Maputo, Mozambique

***A Germany-assisted disaster risk management project kicked off in 2001 in central Mozambique. In 2004, an initiative was launched to integrate disaster risk management into rural development. The initiative has been successful. The following is a report based on a recent evaluation of the initiative.***

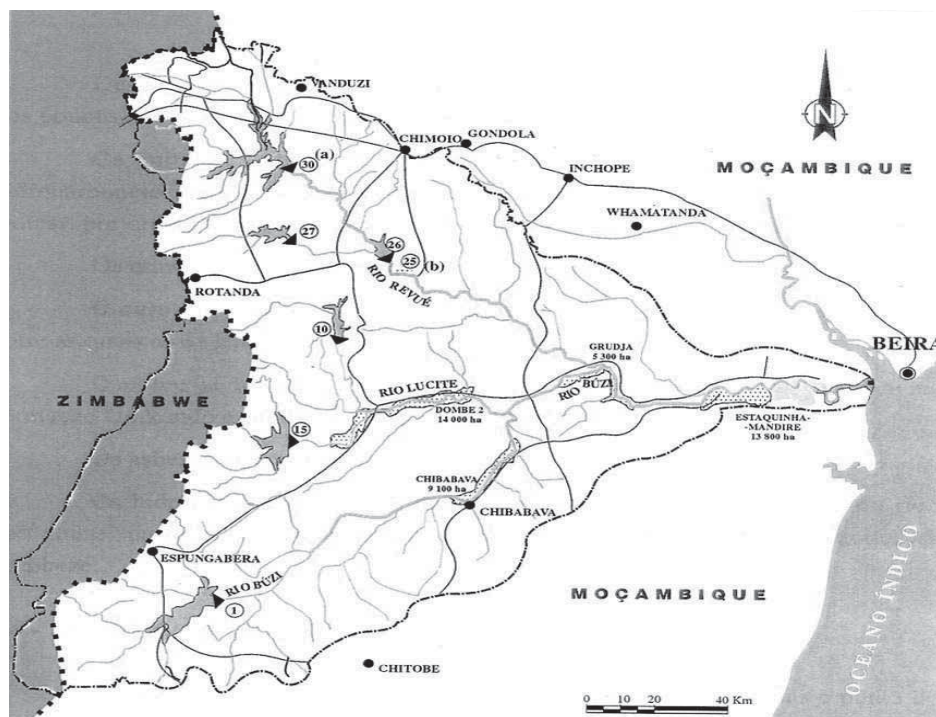
A German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) pilot project integrating disaster risk management into rural development has been successful. This emerges from a report on a March 2005 evaluation of the project launched in 2004 with grassroots communities in Buzi District, Sofala Province (central Mozambique).

The evaluation was deemed appropriate because of the possible threat of flooding due to rising river levels.

Recommendations from the report include the possibility of expanding activities to other vulnerable areas and incorporating the issue of drought in future disaster risk management activities.

## Background

After the 2000 and 2001 floods and cyclones in southern and central Mozambique, the governments of Mozambique and Germany (BMZ) agreed to implement a project from 2001 to 2003 to provide technical assistance through GTZ (German Technical Corporation) and in coordination with INGC (National Institute of Disaster Management). The disaster risk management (DRM) project promoted activities such as risk analysis, disaster mitigation, development of an early warning system and disaster preparedness. The project worked closely with all levels of government and with district communities. The project was community-based, acknowledging the



Map of the Buzi Region, Mozambique

important role played by communities through participation in and adoption of the project.

The GTZ's DRM project worked closely with the Mozambique Red Cross (CVM) at community level as this organization had long served in the area of community development in the districts. The geographical region of Buzi was identified mainly for its extreme vulnerability to cyclones and flooding. In 2004, DRM became incorporated into the existing rural development project (PRODER) which was already being implemented by GTZ in Sofala Province.

As high vulnerability to natural disaster was found to be having a negative impact on people's lives in the high-risk areas, including DRM in the PRODER (rural development) project was seen as a critical area of intervention with its principal objective being "local actors" (district government and communities) applying DRM measures in high-risk zones based on district development plans.

## Local DRM committees operational in 9 communities

To achieve this objective, PRODER-DRM assisted in the establishment of a local DRM system in highly vulnerable zones, as a component of the National Risk Management Policy. One of the key activities towards this objective was the formation of local Disaster Risk Management Committees based in the vulnerable communities. The role of the committees was defined as being responsible for transmitting information regarding disaster risk and ensuring that the community was advised on what to do in case of a disaster.

Local DRM Committees are now functioning in nine communities in the Buzi River Basin.

PRODER-DRM is also providing assistance to improving the flow of information in respect to DRM, including information on early warning systems. In addition to this, GTZ-DRM is playing an important role in providing technical

assistance for the incorporation of DRM into district development plans.

## Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the March 2005 evaluation was to monitor the impact of the DRM component of the GTZ Rural Development Programme (PRODER) in relation to the preparedness of all actors involved in disaster risk management in Buzi River Basin at a time of year when there was risk of flooding and/or cyclone. The evaluation sought to address four key issues with respect to DRM interventions:

- Are communities effectively using the local DRM committees for information, coordination and support in the case of emergencies?
- Is DRM integrated properly into district plans based on risk analysis?
- Is there a sound flow of information and cooperation between the communities and the relevant institutions?
- Are the communities positively motivated and conscientious in the discharge of their tasks?

## Evaluation findings

Findings show that the activities carried out in the selected communities have

been successful. Local DRM committees exist and function with the acceptance of the communities. The communities said they were now more aware and capable of responding to natural disasters. They said they were better prepared to organize themselves, as opposed to the situation 2000/2001 where they “just waited to be told what to do”. In addition, as a result of information disseminated by one of the committees, some community members had relocated to safer areas.

*District-level authorities* were aware and supportive of the committees and felt that information and communication had improved. The 2004 Buzi district development planning process has seen efforts to incorporate DRM activities, and the plan had been submitted for approval.

*The inclusion of DRM messages in school curricula* was proposed. However, how this could function in practice has not been clearly defined.

At the provincial level, *the concept of using local communities* has been well accepted and has given the opportunity for a stronger link between the community and institutions that contribute to the area of DRM. However, there are still some concerns regarding the reliability of the information being transmitted and further development in this area is required.

Regarding *flow of information and cooperation between the communities and the relevant institutions*, there is evidence that the community feels better informed on issues relating to disaster risk than before the Project. This has been partly attributed to increased community awareness resulting in an improved understanding of the information transmitted by the radio. One community member said: “*Before, we would hear the messages on the radio but did not really think about who the message was for. Now we know those messages are for us.*” Radio transmission was clearly identified as the main means of receiving information in respect to the risk of a pending disaster. The committees were the sources of information regarding prevention, preparation and organization.

The committee members were aware of the National Cyclone Early Warning System and could describe the use of the coloured banners to provide adequate warning. Communication between the community and district were regular, consisted of either visits from the DRM team or community committee members travelling to Buzi town to communicate with district authorities.

*Are the DRM committees positively motivated and conscientious in the discharge of their tasks?* It would appear that the committees are motivated and conscientious in the area of DRM. During the few months preceding March 2005, which is the most vulnerable time period for floods and cyclones, the DRM committees called community meetings at their own initiative. Committee and community members are also reported to have taken an active part in DRM workshops and seminars, and are keen on engaging with district and provincial representatives on issues that concern them.

## Conclusions & recommendations

The DRM component is considered to be making a highly valuable contribution to the livelihoods of the communities involved. Introducing a component that focuses on the grassroots level has increased the status and value of the community with respect to the various authorities, who now perceive them not only as beneficiaries but also as an



Local authorities and community members in information/communication training



active, contributing, partner with knowledge that can be used for the development of disaster prevention strategies.

However, based on the findings, some recommendations were made, including the following:

#### *Replicability potential of the DRM model*

Consideration should be given to replicating the DRM model in other communities in Buzi District and other districts with people living in high-risk areas. A number of factors have contributed to the success to date of the DRM component, one key feature being the commitment of the Buzi district administration. This is due to the district's geographical location and level of vulnerability, which resulted in high sensitivity to risk. This aspect may need to be taken into account when selecting other zones for implementation.

#### *Broadening the definition of "disaster"*

Although communities were well aware of flood and cyclone risks, the issue of drought was of equal or greater concern. The DRM component has expanded to address issues of climate change and has already instigated a survey into local knowledge with respect to this issue. It is recommended that drought risk be given a higher priority.

#### *Upgrading of information flow*

It would appear that the DRM component has played a pivotal role in creating communication links and information sharing between the three administrative levels of community, district and province. A number of seminars and workshops were held to build capacity within the various actors groups. There are two main issues to be addressed: 1) improvement of information quality, 2) improvement of communication structure.

#### *Sustainability of the DRM initiative*

The sustainability of the DRM initiative is still not fully proven and a clear exit

strategy needs to be developed if the gains made to date are to be sustained. Ideally, the importance given to DRM by a district needs to be reflected in its district plan. The district planning process therefore is considered to be pivotal in terms of securing the longer-term sustainability of the DRM process. Similarly, continuing support for local committees, the incorporation of civil society and local partners and the allocation of additional resources can only be met within the framework of a district plan.

#### *District planning process*

The process of incorporating DRM into the Buzi district plan has been initiated. However, it is difficult, at this stage, to comment on any impact, as the plan has yet to be implemented. It is necessary to continue to advocate the inclusion and importance of DRM at provincial and national levels. ■

## NIGERIA: Towards a National Stakeholders' Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

### **Dr Olusegun E. Ojo**

Assistant Director,  
Relief and Rehabilitation,  
National Emergency Management Agency  
(NEMA),  
The Presidency, Abuja, Nigeria

A roundtable discussion under the theme "Towards an Effective National Stakeholders' Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Nigeria" was held in the federal capital, Abuja, on 11 March 2005. Organized by Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, the meeting's overall objective was to build synergy amongst the diverse stakeholders and professional disciplines involved in disaster reduction in the country. The one-day meeting, held at NEMA headquarters, was attended by over 50 participants.

### **Disaster & emergencies in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, disaster occurrences and

emergencies have increased in frequency and intensity in the last decade, especially in recent times. Frequent oil spills within the Niger Delta (southern Nigeria) lead to irreparable damage to coastal biospheres.

Global warming and phenomenon such as El Nino have been linked to the sudden rise in the number and severity of recent floods in Jigawa, Kano (states in northern Nigeria), Gomba (state in northeastern Nigeria) and some of the southern States of Nigeria. The expansion of the manufacturing sectors has also resulted in increasing levels of technological emergencies such as industrial pollution and waste.

Consequently, Nigeria have become increasingly at risk to a wide number of natural hazards with urbanization pressuring people to rapidly build unregulated housing along known flood plains and unstable hills. There is now a growing recognition from the public and

private sectors that the only way to address the escalating costs is not a reactive relief doling but a preventive, comprehensive and long-term approach to natural disasters.

However, a number of States, most local government authorities and communities in the country are yet to institutionalize and mainstream disaster management into the overall development plans. To reduce (mitigate) and manage human, economic, social and environmental losses and other consequences of disasters, integrated development strategies must be developed collaboratively by the various tiers of government and the civil society.

In the last four years of its transformation and operation, the experiences of NEMA, the agency for emergency and disaster management in Nigeria, have shown that the multiplicity of avoidable emergencies across the country and their budgetary implications to governments and individuals are becoming worrisome. An

urgent need to embrace the conceptual shift to medium/long-term disaster risk reduction paradigm is therefore paramount.

Most of devastating disasters can be pre-empted and averted if relevant government departments work in synergy with NGOs, CBOs and other concerned stakeholders to address risks of natural disasters, provide weather forecasts and early warning, help communities prevent and recover from disasters, and build resilient infrastructure with appropriate education and public enlightenment.

To build an appropriate synergy amongst the diverse stakeholders and professional disciplines, NEMA, in line with the UN/ISDR guidelines, has identified the need to pursue the following goals:

1. Increase public awareness from public authorities;
2. Obtain commitment from public authorities;
3. Stimulate inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral partnerships; and
4. Improve the scientific knowledge of the causes of natural disasters and their impacts.

It was to pursue these goals that NEMA hosted the roundtable discussion "Towards an Effective National Stakeholders' Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Nigeria" on 11 March 2005.

## Proceedings

The roundtable discussion was designed for stakeholders to share their views and experiences in this emerging subject area of disaster risk reduction, governance and development. UN/ISDR Africa, the UN System focal point for disaster risk reduction (DRR) in Africa, made a presentation at the meeting, with the National Assembly given the parley appropriate legislative teeth and endorsement.

The Director General of NEMA, Alhaji S. Makarfi, observed the global shift in focus from response to DRR and stressed that Nigeria would not be left behind. He highlighted that the Agency, being the focal point for disaster management (DM) in the country, has the responsibility to mobilize the diverse (public and private) stakeholders and collaborate with the UN/ISDR to build a sustainable DRR strategy for the country. He concluded by urging the participants to ensure that the current



*Hon. Dr Gyang D. Dantong, Chairman of the roundtable meeting (holding a microphone) and some national stakeholders in DRR in Nigeria*

roundtable discussion should ultimately lead to the formation of a national platform of stakeholders on DRR in the country.

Chairing the occasion, the Chairman House Committee on Emergency and Disaster Preparedness (in the National Assembly), represented by Hon. Dr Gyang D. Dantong, informed the participants that his newly-established committee was expected to give legislative support and oversight function to NEMA and other stakeholders in the management of disasters in the country.

The Chairman observed the need for decentralization of DM down to local authorities and communities. He also observed the need for appropriate funding, institutional support and mainstreaming DRR paradigm into national development through the relevant prevention, mitigation and rehabilitation of potential vulnerabilities and hazards. He further informed the participants that it was imperative that his committee, in collaboration with NEMA, should seek to create new legislation and policies to strengthen existing operations, and to integrate DRR into the national development plans and the ongoing needs of the economic agenda. He concluded by affirming the House Committee's support for the formation of a collaborative national platform of stakeholders in DRR for the country.

## Discussion & resolution

The meeting comprising some 53 participants from the public, private, NGOs and civil society unanimously supported

and voted for the motion to set up a National Stakeholders' Platform for DRR.

Five organizations, in addition to NEMA, were selected to constitute an Interim Committee to come up with the modalities for the National Platform: the civil society represented by the Nigerian Red Cross, the media to be represented by Voice of Nigeria and Nigeria Television Agency, the executive arm of government to be represented by the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution and NEMA, and the legislative arm by the House Committee on Emergency and Disaster Preparedness.

## Conclusion

Accomplishing these goals requires political commitment as well as participatory approaches and active mobilization of all relevant stakeholders for both programme conceptualisation and execution. The ability of individuals to appreciate the root causes of hazards would go a long way to promote risk reduction and sustainable development. Existing institutions are to be strengthened by appropriate legislation at various levels of government. To demonstrate the lessons learnt, modest disaster reduction projects would be embarked upon in a few selected vulnerable communities for purposes of replication in other areas.

The National Platform would embark on stakeholders' assessment of technical capacity and resources to address emergencies and disasters in the country and thereby proceed to put together a national programme of implementation. ■

# Disaster Management & Development: An Overview

Excerpts from Presentation by  
**Hon. Dr Jerry Sonny Ugokwe**  
 Ph.D., Chairman,  
 House Committee on Emergency & Disaster Preparedness,  
 The Federal House of Representatives,  
 National Assembly, Nigeria

“ ... In view of the constitutional responsibility of any country to protect its citizens from both natural and man-made disasters, the Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Committee was set up in the Federal House of Representatives to offer legislative support and oversight function to the pre-emption, prevention and management of disasters in Nigeria. This has been done through various advocacy meetings within the Presidency and mobilization and support to disaster-ravaged constituencies.

In Nigeria, since the coming of NEMA Act 12 of 1999 as amended by Act 50, it observes the need to decentralize disaster management to the local communities, which usually are the theatre of disaster. It observes the need for appropriate funding and institutional strengthening through legislative support and mainstreaming DRR into the national development plans in Nigeria. Finally, it supports the need to pursue the cost-effective disaster risk reduction paradigm through relevant prevention, mitigation and rehabilitation of potential vulnerabilities and hazards in the country. In line with the UN/ISDR disaster risk reduction framework, and considering that disaster management is multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholding, the House of Representatives therefore supports the formation of a collaborative national platform of stakeholders in DRR for the country.

## Disaster Management in Nigeria: Legislative Approach

The main types of disasters in Nigeria include floods, desertification, gully and coastal erosion, diseases and epidemics, ethno-religious disturbances, fire disasters, building and dam collapse, destructive storms, drought, explosion of ammunitions, aviation, maritime and road accident and earth tremors.

The establishment of the Committee on Emergency and Disaster Preparedness by the House of Representatives on 30 March 2004 has put disaster management and risk reduction on a very sound footing for the first time in the history of Nigeria. The creation of the Committee was the official legislative response to the issue of emergency and disaster management in the history of Nigeria since independence. The Committee, with primary oversight over NEMA, has been preserving for the effective and adequate empowerment of NEMA through adequate funding in the Appropriation Bill. The Committee has seen to it that the much-needed search and rescue helicopters were provided for in the just-passed 2005 budget. The Committee as well has made arrangements with the President to hold a National Emergency Summit early next quarter, of which the Agency would be in the centre stage and would play a major role.

The House Committee on Emergency and Disaster Preparedness wishes to enjoin the Agency to be conscious of the need to build up its capacity for hazard assessment, forecasting and prevention with effective stakeholders. It must also effectively mobilize the other tiers of government to be alive to their constitutional responsibility of protecting their citizenry from disasters. In specific terms, the House Committee needs to pursue the following agenda in collaboration with NEMA:

- Formulation of a National Disaster Management Policy based on the foundation of risk reduction and sustainable development;
  - Review the existing legislation to conform with the present democratic norms and also to develop new set of laws in conformity with the paradigm shift from mere response to disasters to increased state of preparedness and proactiveness on the side of all safety managers;
  - Cooperating with NEMA and all other safety agencies towards achieving maximum safety of lives and properties;
  - Integration of DRR into the national development plans and the ongoing needs of the economic agenda; and
  - Raising the awareness of the populace and pursuing decentralization of disaster management to the barest grassroots.
- To accomplish all of these, the House Committee would always make sure that NEMA gets stable and adequate funding through National Assembly Appropriation Acts. ... ”



# SENEGAL seeks to mainstream disaster risk reduction in poverty reduction strategy

**Mr Abdoulaye Ndiaye,**  
Director of Civil Protection,  
Ministry of Interior,  
Dakar, Senegal

A “Technical Meeting on the Mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction into the Process of Updating the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)” was held in Dakar on 1 June 2005, organized by the country’s Finance Ministry.

The meeting was part of a three-day workshop establishing the country’s ISDR National Platform. Organized jointly by the Directorate for Civil Protection and UN/ISDR Africa, the workshop was attended by representatives of government ministries having a stake in disaster reduction.

The meeting began with a presentation on the PRSP. It emerged from the presentation that the country’s PRSP, which had been adopted by the Senegalese government in December 2001 and approved by partners in 2002, was: 1) an overall strategy for establishing conditions conducive for sustainable growth and effective fight against poverty, but not a specific anti-poverty programme; 2) the consideration of sectoral and decentralized policies as part of the country’s development management tools; and 3) a reference framework for partners’ interventions.

## Link between poverty, vulnerability exposed by PRSP

The above presentation was followed by very informed discussions on disaster risk management issues.

It emerged from the discussions that the PRSP highlighted very clearly the link between poverty and poor coping capacity in society. Vulnerability, being a risk/risk management capacity ratio, should be identified and evaluated in all sectors. Its identification is a must for



*Mr Abdoulaye Ndiaye, Director of Civil Protection*

disaster reduction. It is therefore a key data of the disaster reduction mechanism. All the speakers therefore stressed the need for relevant databases to back the PRSP.

The meeting participants said: “Here we have the very foundation of the platform (for disaster reduction) which we intend to put in place. In other words, the national platform is the starting point for disaster and accident management

capacity building. The platform’s inter-sectoral and cross-cutting role is such that it should be a strategic and unifying element for the various PRSP activities.”

## Mainstreaming DRR into PRSP by December 2005

The following recommendations were, among others, made by the participants to mainstream disaster risk reduction (DRR) into the PRSP:

1. There is need to establish a national platform for disaster reduction.
2. A timetable should be set for having a national platform and a national strategy and mainstreaming the latter in the PRSP by December 2005.
3. Disaster risk reduction should be a national and local priority.
4. A sound institutional framework should be established for successful implementation of the necessary activities.
5. Disaster reduction should be dissociated from social protection.
6. Local communities should be provided with a special fund for DRR management. ■



*Some participants at the technical meeting*

# GHANA: Disaster risk reduction initiatives in the fields of governance and poverty reduction

**Brig-Gen (Rtd) Joseph Odei**

National Coordinator,  
National Disaster Management Organisation  
(NADMO),  
Accra, Ghana

***Ghana needs to shift from disaster management to disaster risk reduction. Initiatives have been taken to facilitate the shift. The following is a shortened version of a paper presented by the national coordinator of Ghana's National Disaster Management Organisation on 16 May 2005.***

## Introduction

In recent times, disasters have caused major disruptions in the economic and social development of developing countries, including Ghana, due mainly to our inability to cope effectively with natural hazards and risks created by socio-economic and political developmental processes. Disasters have worsened the plight of the rural and urban poor, claimed many lives, caused material losses and diverted scarce resources from poverty reduction programmes to rehabilitate victims and to repair or replace damaged social and economic infrastructure.

Although the hazard profile and the history of disasters in Ghana have not been as calamitous as in some developing countries, recent natural and man-made disasters such as flooding, domestic, industrial and wild fires, tribal communal conflicts, epidemics and threats posed by a possible earthquake have made it important to shift emphasis from disaster response and emergency relief to disaster risk reduction and mitigation through the integration of disaster risk reduction into sustainable development.

Disaster risk reduction means foreseeing danger and taking measures either to prevent or mitigate their impact through adequate preparation and effective response. This, in turn, involves identification of hazards, forecasting of



*Brig-Gen (Rtd) Joseph Odei, who is also the ISDR National focal point*

impending events likely to cause damage to life, property, infrastructure or the environment; processing and dissemination of warnings or instructions to the appropriate authorities or populations, as well as undertaking appropriate and timely actions to reduce the risk or mitigate the impact of the impending disaster.

To facilitate a paradigm shift from disaster management (DM) to disaster risk reduction (DRR), the following gaps need to be filled:

- Lack of clear policy and effective strategy for disaster risk reduction, prevention, response and rehabilitation.
- Lack of integration of disaster risk reduction programmes into sustainable development.
- Inadequate resource commitment to disaster risk reduction and management.
- Limited national/public ownership of risk reduction and management programmes, etc.

To address these gaps and constraints, a three-day national disaster workshop was organised in Accra in 2004 by the Ghanaian Ministry of Interior and UN/

ISDR Africa. Participants in the three-day workshop were drawn from the ministries, departments, security agencies, UN agencies and the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO).

The objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- To review the national policies and the legal framework for disaster management and risk reduction
- To understand disaster risk reduction and how to integrate it into sustainable development.
- To form a coalition of interests for disaster risk reduction between Government, ministries, security agencies, local authorities and community-based organisations for disaster risk reduction.
- To build consensus for the way toward.

## Governance Initiatives

The most important recommendation of the workshop was the need for more active involvement of Government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) in disaster management through the establishment of a National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) to facilitate good governance and poverty reduction, under the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS).

A number of proposals with far-reaching consequences on governance were made. These include:

- Strong political leadership and commitment with clear and pragmatic vision for disaster reduction.
- Formulation of an integrated National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy.
- Strengthening compliance and enforcement of regulations including reviewing legislative authority of NADMO for effective enforcement.

- Promotion of disaster risk reduction at national, regional and district levels.
- Enhancing the capacity of grassroots disaster volunteers groups (DVGs) as a basis for strengthening local involvement in disaster reduction, employment generation and poverty reduction.
- Development of an action programme for moving forward with the transformation of the disaster management system.
- Provision of adequate resources to institutions involved in disaster risk reduction programme in the country, particularly NADMO which is the lead agency for disaster prevention and management.

Governance denotes the responsive relations between the state, the private sector, civil society and local administration such that the safety, social wellbeing, social justice and equity are attained and maintained in an environment of sustained disaster risk reduction and management. In the past, effective national disaster prevention and management came under serious criticisms due mainly to the existing structural and policy defects inherent in the process. This led to a conscious effort to review the policies and structures to bring disaster management in line with modern practices.

The paradigm shift has also necessitated a review of the Act (Act 517) 1996 that established NADMO. Emphasis has been shifted to coordination, prevention and awareness creation through information dissemination, communication and education, employment generation and poverty reduction.

## **Current governance initiatives**

Disaster Management is multi-sectoral and inter-disciplinary in nature and involves a wide variety of inter-related activities at national and local levels. Some of the changes proposed in the field of governance in the revised Act include the following:

- a) Clear and pragmatic policy for disaster risk reduction
- b) Establishment of the National Disaster Management Committee under the

chairmanship of the minister of interior

- c) Establishment of a Disaster Management Council to be responsible for policy formulation, administration and supervision, to ensure the implementation of policies and programmes under the chairmanship of the minister of the interior
- d) Establishment of Regional and District Disaster Management and Technical Committees
- e) Establishment of an effective participatory process
- f) Legislative empowerment through the immunisation of NADMO staff and agents in the performance of their duties
- g) Review and strengthening of the Technical Committees to provide expert advice in economic, social and environmentally related programmes.
- h) Establishment of a Disaster Fund to mobilise more financial support for disaster risk reduction and management. This is necessary to subsidise government resources, which do not cover unforeseen emergencies.
- i) Establishment of community-based disaster volunteer groups to engender community participation in disaster risk reduction and management
- j) Establishment of a NADMO web site ([www.nadmo.org](http://www.nadmo.org)) to bring the activities of the organisation to international limelight, seek international collaboration and support, and share knowledge and experience.
- k) As part of the initiatives to enhance performance, the Government provided 100 vehicles and other equipment to strengthen the capacity of NADMO to meet the challenges of disaster management in Ghana.

## **Poverty Reduction Initiatives**

In Ghana, the Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), which is the government's agenda for growth and prosperity, has identified poverty as one of the major causes of man-made disasters in the

country, since the rural poor degrade and over-exploit the environment through poor agricultural and animal husbandry practices, surface mining, over-exploitation of the forest for firewood and charcoal, bushfires, etc. to eke out a bare existence. Besides, natural hazards including earthquake, drought, storms and floods tend to hurt the poor because they normally live in areas with greater population density, poor infrastructure, housing and sanitary facilities.

## **Social Mobilisation**

In line with these trends, NADMO has adopted social mobilisation as a key strategy for disaster risk and poverty reduction. This involves the organisation, training and equipping of community-based disaster volunteer groups (DVGs) made up of young men and women, to assist in the identification of risks, prevention and the management of disasters and to undertake poverty reduction and community development programmes.

The community-based disaster volunteer concept aims at ensuring active community participation in the disaster management process. It includes, among other things, the following:

- Mobilising and training of the youth and the unemployed for the purpose of equipping them with the necessary technical know-how to enable them participate in disaster management, employment generation and community development.
- Sensitising local communities to identify their potentials and strengths as a real motivating force for development, decision-making and community livelihood development.
- Assisting communities deprived of opportunities to embark on the provision of employment and social amenities like school blocks, places of convenience, wells, dams, construction of health, day care centres as a poverty reduction strategy.
- Encourage communities to understand and participate in government programmes and activities.



In a nutshell, the DVG concept has been developed and adopted, among other things, as a poverty reduction strategy to assist the volunteers to undertake income-generating activities to enable them remain within their communities to assist NADMO in the prevention and management of disasters in their communities. The DVG concept was also designed to bring the volunteers, who are mostly unemployed and deprived, into mainstream of economic activities to enable them take advantage of the opportunities created by various government interventions under the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS).

The DVGs serve as a channel for public education in the areas of health, bush fire, prevention, tree planting, HIV/AIDS, environment and governance.

## **Current Poverty Reduction Initiatives by NADMO**

There are about five hundred (500) volunteer groups, with a total membership of about 12,000 individuals, in the country, working under the auspices and direction of NADMO. The following projects were implemented:

1. Raising of over 9,000,000 seedlings of various tree species, including mahogany, wawa, emire, kushea, cedrella, ceiba, etc. to support government's forest plantation programme. Over 3 billion was earned from the project by the DVGs countrywide in 2004.
2. Purchasing and distribution of nine (9) tractors with HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative) fund to support DVG agricultural activities in the regions in 2003.
3. Training and equipping DVGs in the fringe communities of the forest reserves in alternative livelihood projects in agriculture, small scale and cottage industries, since the economic activities of the rural poor such as hunting, indiscriminate tree felling for firewood and charcoal burning result in bushfires and destruction of forests.
4. A countrywide minor season vegetable project in southern Ghana and soya bean cultivation in the three



*Women and girls are fighting against poverty in Ghana*

northern regions for a total of 158 DVGs in 2003 and 2004.

5. Assisting over 50,000 Ghanaian returnees/deportees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees fleeing from wars and conflicts from various parts of the world to resettle.
6. In 2005, NADMO will continue to facilitate the implementation of various poverty reduction projects in community development, agriculture and small-scale economic ventures.

## **Conclusion**

Since disaster risk reduction and management are a shared responsibility and an ongoing process, effective implementation of national platforms, regular review and monitoring of policy programmes, clear understanding of the role of major stakeholders and the active support of top political leadership and local authorities could ensure the development of a culture of prevention in a resilient society.

The obvious challenge is to provide adequate financial and material support,

ensure effective coordination and cooperation among key stakeholders.

Disaster risk reduction still largely rests within the auspices of the public sector authorities and the setting of priorities is key to effective disaster management. The opinions of experts and academics and leading development organisations will have influence, but will not be adequate to elicit critical resources and concerted effort required for effective disaster risk reduction and management.

It is therefore imperative that we introduce and sustain the new concept of disaster management by establishing a strong, effective and influential National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction for sustainable development. Such a platform will eliminate frustrations, lack of coordination and unnecessary misunderstanding among stakeholders that have plagued the process of disaster management for sometime now. This will create a resilient society consciously prepared to face the menace of disasters that confront their lives. ■

# SEYCHELLES: National secretariat, fund for disaster management established

## Mr Michel Vielle

Director-General,  
National Risk & Disaster Management Secretariat,  
Mahe, Seychelles

***The Seychelles is away from most prominent disaster zones. Yet, the Government has established a national disaster risk management agency, and provided 4 million... US dollars to a national disaster fund.***

Although the Seychelles lies outside most prominent disaster zones, the frequency and intensity of storms and other hazards affecting the country is increasing. Events such as the 1997 floods, the 1999 bush fire, the 2002 tropical depression with winds exceeding 120 km per hour, the 2004 floods and the December 2004 *tsunami* and ensuing torrential rains bear testimonies to this. Yet, many individuals and organizations in the country have remained reluctant to pursue risk reduction as a key objective, or even to protect their own projects against potential hazards.

In the meantime, development initiatives have been affected time and time again by disasters while aid resources already committed to development projects have been reallocated to rehabilitation efforts. There is thus a need to integrate disaster risk reduction in development planning.

## Executive Agency for National Disaster Committee

In October 2004, the National Risk and Disaster Management Secretariat was established in the President's Office with the appointment of Mr Michel Vielle as the full-time Director-General for Risk and Disaster Management and also the focal point for disaster coordination in the Seychelles.

This Secretariat acts as an executive agency for the National Disaster Committee (NDC). Chaired by the Office of the President, this committee has been meeting theoretically once every two to three months and on an

*ad hoc basis*, and is composed of high-ranking officials from the President's Office, Police/Fire Department, Army, Department of Environment, Department of Transport, Department of Local Government, Department of Culture and Department of Health.

The immediate roles of the secretariat are but not limited to:

- review and finalise the National Disaster Preparedness Plan;
- promote the development of an emergency and awareness culture in Seychelles;
- ensure coordination, cooperation, consistency and synergy between prevention/planning and preparedness activities;
- foster better use of resources, lobby for resources;
- ensure the organization of joint training and disaster simulation activities;
- assure the presence of internal ministerial and district-level plans for emergency response and preparedness;
- see that a hazard analysis is carried out that concludes on the location, frequency, probability (when possible) and potential impacts of different hazards/risks; and
- develop legal instrument for disaster preparedness and response

## Addressing the issue of disaster risk reduction

To be able to achieve these objectives, the National Risk and Disaster Management Secretariat launched a Disaster Planning and Response Sub-Committee that would address the issue of disaster risk reduction in a holistic manner and ensure the integration of disaster mitigation in development plans. To facilitate this process, five working groups formed from the Disaster Planning and Response Sub-Committee have each been assigned with one specific task as follows:

### *Working Group One: Awareness & sensitization campaign for the population*

The group is responsible for developing awareness, education and sensitization programmes for the population. One of its immediate tasks was to prepare material for the National Day exhibition held in June hailed as a success. Several posters and leaflets were prepared and distributed, and people visiting the exhibition were able to have some flashbacks of past disasters through audio-visual aids.

### *Working Group Two: Multi-hazard early warning system*

The group is looking at developing protocols for a national multi-hazard early warning system.

### *Working Group Three: Planning & response*

The group is looking at Prevention and Planning Guidelines that can be incorporated in the planning and development process. This group will also be responsible for looking at mapping of hazards and risk areas.

### *Working Group Four: Communication*

The group is looking at the existing telecommunications facilities for disaster preparedness and response to propose a reliable and cost-effective telecommunications system for a new Command Centre and for networking all emergency services and first responders on a single telecommunications system.

### *Working Group Five:*

The group is looking at developing the legal framework for disaster management in Seychelles.

## National fund for Disaster management

In 2005, the Government has set aside the sum of 4 million US dollars as a National Disaster Fund.

Managed by the National Risk and Disaster Management Secretariat, the fund is also used for prevention, mitigation and preparedness activities.■

# MADAGASCAR allocates percentage of “Shock Response” fund to risk reduction

## Mr Jacky Roland Randimbiarison

Executive Secretary,  
National Relief Council (CNS),  
Madagascar

Madagascar has joined UN/ISDR's efforts to promote, regionally and internationally, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and the mainstreaming of DRR into development activities especially in Africa.

Malagasy President Marc Ravalomanana on 06 May 2005 donated, on behalf of his country, 20,000 US dollars to UN/ISDR Africa for disaster reduction-related activities in Africa (*see article on page 48*).

Such a gesture from the leader of a least developed African country like Madagascar is reflective of the importance of disaster risk reduction for development.

In fact, as evidenced by the several initiatives and considerable efforts pledged during the January 2005 Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction, disaster reduction today is drawing increased attention and consideration all over the world.

## Disaster risk reduction in Madagascar

Madagascar is exposed to several natural hazards, the most frequent ones being cyclones, floods, fires, locust invasion and drought. The country has a National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (SNGRC in French) which provides the foundation for its “Disaster Risk Reduction Act” voted by Parliament in 2002 (a few months after Mr Ravalomanana came to power). Madagascar is also one of the first African countries to incorporate disaster risk reduction in a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

The country's emergency relief provision system is fully operational. The government, through the National Relief Council (CNS in French) which operates

under the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform, coordinates all actions on the basis of the above-mentioned national strategy. In case of emergency, the CNS is on site in the shortest time possible to assess the damage and provide immediate relief.

Regarding information gathering, the CNS chairs the national platform on disaster risk and management called CRIC (Disaster Stakeholders' Brainstorming Committee) that is composed of all stakeholders: the Office of the President, Office of the Prime Minister, technical ministries, UN implementation agencies, national and international associations and NGOs, donors. A number of religious denominations are also represented by some associations or NGOs. Every CRIC member's tasks and duties are defined according to each and every one's available means and resources.

For optimal efficiency, actions are coordinated locally by those stakeholders who are present in risk zones, in collaboration with local authorities and some officials from decentralized relief provision structures established at each territorial administration level: region, district, commune and *fokontany* (village in rural areas, neighbourhood in urban centres).

During operations, monitoring and evaluation missions are carried out, whose findings are discussed and analyzed at central level to devise possible corrective measures.

When a natural or man-made disaster occurs, people's requests are addressed to the Office of the President, Office of the Prime Minister and the Interior Minister – represented by the National Relief Council (CNS), the latter providing leadership for organized action.

## Project funding special fund

Actions to restore disaster victims' living conditions to normalcy are based on information disseminated by the CNS. But



Mr Jacky Rolland Randimbiarison,  
Executive Secretary of CNS

information serving all the existing projects and programmes originate from the CRIC.

Regarding resources, many donors and stakeholders in 2004 volunteered all kinds of contributions – food and others – to restore people's lives to normalcy. The same applies to health and agricultural sectors through the provision of medicines and seeds.

Again in 2004, the World Bank-funded FID (Development Intervention Fund) project secured a special fund worth 50 million US dollars for cyclone damage, and the PSDR (Sectoral Programme for Rural Development) project secured 5 million US dollars also for cyclone damage. Securing these additional loans had required some adjustments in the two projects' technical documents.

With the help of the above fund, the FID covered the rehabilitation of damaged basic social and socio-economic infrastructures (school buildings, primary health centres, drinking water supply systems, markets, structures, rural tracks, and even government buildings. The PSDR, for its part, dealt with the



rehabilitation of hydro-agricultural infrastructures.

In early 2005, the southern part of the country was hit by two tropical cyclones known as “Ernest” and “Felapi”. Being present at the mid-term review of the World Bank-funded FID project, the CNS sought the support of the World Bank to infrastructure rehabilitation action. The World Bank agreed. Then, a new component called “Shock Response” was established within the FID project. That percentage of project funding is allotted to actions aimed at restoring disaster victims’ lives to normalcy.

Such a percentage of project funding allotted to disaster risk reduction is essential because planning covers the entire span of the following project development cycle: Prevention –

Forecasting & Planning – Alert - Interventions & Rehabilitation - Evaluation – Experience Feedback.

### Disaster victims hail relief service

It is to be noted that people affected by disaster impacts have started becoming integrated, through participation, into disaster risk management. In fact, they do no longer hesitate to air their views on the quality of interventions.

Since early 2005, a large number of communes, districts and regions have addressed letters conveying grateful thanks, which reflects disaster victims’ satisfaction over the interventions.

How to explain such a satisfaction? Three factors are worth noting: the above-mentioned structures; grassroots

community participation in some risk areas; mobilization capacity at central level.

### Lessons learnt

Disaster risk reduction is a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary process that is part and parcel of the country’s development policy. But it emerges from our experience and observations, at least in Madagascar, that the following two elements are a must: *political commitment* to action taking from the country’s leaders and from stakeholders and *resource mobilization* first at national level in the interest of ownership, then at international level in the name of solidarity and as a form of involvement of donors and international financial institutions in national development. ■

## SENEGAL: Disaster reduction workshop held for journalists

### Mr. Abdoulaye Ndiaye

Director of Civil Protection,  
Ministry of Interior,  
Dakar, Senegal

A workshop entitled « *Civil Protection – Environment – Media* » was held on 22 and 23 March 2005, for journalists from the *Association des communicateurs en environnement et développement durable*, ACED [Association of Environment and Sustainable Development Communicators].

Organized by the Directorate for Civil Protection in the Senegalese Interior Ministry, the workshop was part of ongoing disaster reduction capacity building programmes.

At the end of the proceedings, the journalists adopted a plan of action and issued a number of recommendations.

Opening the workshop on 22 March 2005, Mr Abdoulaye Ndiaye, the Director for Civil Protection in Senegal, said: “The media has the important mission of informing and sensitizing the population on disaster reduction and environmental protection.”

In his speech, the representative of the Senegal Union of Information and Communication Practitioners, Synpics (in French), focused on the wreck of the vessel known as « Le Joola » on 26 September 2002, an accident which had caused the death of many people and considerable material damage.

### Partnership framework, plan of action

The union leader said: “This disaster as well as other disasters such as desertification, bush fires, locust threats, coastal erosion, floods, storms, marine and urban pollution, chemical disasters, building collapse, road accidents,

constitute a challenge not only to the government but also to journalists.”

The following topics were presented by state representatives and some journalists:

- “Risk Reduction Policy in Senegal” by a representative of the Directorate for Civil Protection;
- “Organizing Disaster Relief” by a representative of the National Fire Brigade;
- “Radio Broadcasting Treatment of Environmental Information” by a representative of the Senegalese national radio and television;
- “Media and Risk Zones” by a representative of the private-owned “Sud Quotidien” daily newspaper;
- “How to Communicate with the Press during Disasters” by the manager of the private-owned “FM Environnement” radio station.

At the end of the proceedings, the ACED members and state representatives defined a framework for partnership and developed a short-term plan of action whose implementation was to be followed up by a steering committee chaired by the “FM Environnement” radio station manager.

A number of recommendations were also issued at the end of the workshop: developing a culture of risk prevention at all levels; involving journalists in the definition and implementation of disaster reduction strategies, programmes and policies; mainstreaming disaster reduction in sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies, policies and programmes; organizing training sessions in and visits to risk areas.

## Recommendations

### 1. *Better understanding of civil protection issues, especially disaster reduction*

- Capacity building for information and communication practitioners.
- Organizing training sessions on management methods for major risks: industrial accidents, home accidents, drowning, epidemics, road accidents, etc.
- Organizing field visits to risk zones.
- Developing ACED and Synpics members' knowledge.

### 2. *Information processing in the area of disaster reduction*

- Capacity building for information and communication practitioners.
- Organizing training sessions on managing information during disaster crises.
- Developing ACED and Synpics members' knowledge.

### 3. *Better consideration of civil protection issues by media houses*

- Advocacy work directed at government departments.
- Developing a journalists' guide on disaster reduction.
- Government departments' better receptiveness of mind towards media representatives.

### 4. *Information, education of the population*

#### **Awareness raising**

- Involving ACED in the development and implementation of prevention programmes.
- Ensuring that ACED takes part in ORSEC (relief provision) plan implementation exercises.
- Associating journalists to the scheduled presentation seminar on the conclusions of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Japan, in January 2005.
- Associating opinion leaders.
- Developing a culture of risk prevention among the population.
- Associating information and communication practitioners to the workshop establishing a national platform for disaster risk prevention in Senegal.
- Involving journalists in the development of an integrated strategy for disaster reduction in Senegal.
- Strengthening the Information/ Public Relations Unit of ORSEC (relief provision) plans.
- Seeking the allocation of a radio frequency from the Telecommunications Control Agency (ART in French), a frequency that

would be in use only in emergency situations.

### 4. *Development of a culture of risk prevention among the population*

- Making use of private-owned media for information dissemination in emergency situations.
- Organizing radio and TV programmes on disaster reduction in French and in the national languages.
- Involving further information and communication practitioners in activities to mark international days for disaster reduction organized by the UN and the International Organization for Civil Protection.

### 5. *Better involvement of ACED in disaster reduction activities*

#### **Decentralizing**

- Strengthening ACED with regional poles.
- Establishing a Communication Division in the Directorate for Civil Protection.
- Strengthening relations between ACED and the Public Relations Bureau of the Fire Brigade.
- Organizing meetings between ACED regional poles and regional civil protection commissions.

### 6. *Action plan follow-up*

- Ownership of the plan of action.
- Evaluation.
- Establishing a steering committee.
- Promotion of the plan of action to the government, the Synpics, development partners, etc.
- Developing a press book and activity report. ■

# GABON: Successful disaster risk reduction achieved in capital city slum area

**Dr Evelyne Solange N. Loubamono**

Deputy Director-General,  
Ministry of Environment,  
Libreville, Gabon

The capital of Gabon, Libreville, is made up of a large number of watersheds whose largest rivers flow into the Como Estuary. Five of the rivers are causing great concern to local leaders.

As the years went by, financially and materially destitute rural people from the country's nine provinces have settled in valley bottoms in quest for better life. The resulting large settlements turned the valley bottoms into high-risk zones exposed to various risks. Even worse, the swampy valley bottom dwellers have invariably been exposed and increasingly vulnerable to flood risk.

In actual fact, such unstable environments are real "risk complexes" where a large number of risks, especially flood, erosion and pollution ones, arise and interact. One of such environments is Batavea Valley where some preventive measures have been taken to overcome the annual flood phenomenon.

## The Batavea annual floods

Batavea Valley is inhabited by a dense population disparately settled in the flood bed, in the unstable sides of the numerous sub-tributaries of the river and upstream from Batavea river. These abandoned swampy valley bottoms have not always been particularly attractive. The ever-growing population is exposed to annual floods occurring during the two local rainy seasons (September–December and March–June). Such floods result from heavy rainfall on Libreville, especially on the whole watershed. The floods are aggravated by disparate human settlements in the flood bed, which, during rainy seasons, increases the base level of the river and that of the waterway's flow.

Also, unprocessed waste from households, garages, hospitals, factories,

mortuaries, etc., flow into the waterways turned into a dumping ground, especially in Batavea Valley, effecting hydrodynamic change through heavy sedimentation. Batavea therefore has become a real risk fish-tank where flood marks, especially sundry waste swept along and deposited during flood seasons, worsens the pollution process which, in turn, aggravates the flood phenomenon.

As a result, annual floods have become more and more frequent and often disastrous in Batavea Valley. Even in the past, when no dense human settlement was found in the area, floods were always particularly severe with some impact on both the environment and people, children being invariably the most vulnerable age group.

## Increasingly alarming risks

Implementing preventive measures therefore became an urgent necessity in Batavea Valley. Indeed, the phenomenon invariably has had a serious impact on the geosystem, sociosystem and people. Regarding the geosystem, floods would make some vegetal species proliferate, vegetal species whose growth was from the outset made easier by the shape of the valley bottom. The floods were usually accompanied by considerable erosion. Regarding the sociosystem, makeshift dwellings were often swept away, as were wooden bridges linking the two river banks. Regarding humans, the strength of the water current would kill people, especially children, often from drowning.

On the health front, the flood period aggravated health hazards, especially water-borne diseases such as bilharziasis, typhoid, viral hepatitis, dysentery and diarrhoea. Epidemic risk was actually significant. Malaria, which developed easily because of the increased number of ponds, was a real health hazard. In addition, reptiles could proliferate easily in some parts of the valley. In rainy season, water would ferry the reptiles to

people's houses where they hide and coiled up under beds in dark areas. The reptiles were also a real danger for those exposed to them, thus aggravating the already existing health risks.

## Making some adjustments on the river

Given the mounting risks and to reduce their possible effects, local authorities decided to take efficient preventive measures.

The measures focused on making some adjustments on the river, especially by protecting some parts of the watershed with a canalization system.

This protection measure also aimed to clean up parts of the unhealthy zone to improve people's environment.

## Flood reduction achieved

The canalisation system helped to reduce the impacts of the harmful floods in the valley bottom. Today, in flood periods, water would still rise but without harmful consequences. Even though occasional floods do still occur, serious consequences like human losses or drowning have disappeared. Disastrous floods have been mitigated. The preventive measures taken were successful even though increased waste deposits in many sections of the waterway lead to rapid rise of water level. This is because proper consideration was given to maximum water rise when building the canalization system.

In conclusion, it is to be noted that because the above solution dealt only with the sole flood aspect of the existing risks, it is just one component of prevention. To achieve better and lasting results, it is advisable to implement other components of prevention such as precaution. But to this end, public awareness is needed on the risks prevailing in the area. ■



# Glimpses of concerns over hydrometeorological disasters in Africa

**Yinka R. Adebayo, Ph.D**

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World Meteorological Organization (WMO),  
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***Already known perhaps is the fact that over 90 per cent of all natural disasters are of hydrometeorological origin. Little known is the following: climate change may spell more serious problems for Africa. Senior WMO Officer Yinka Adebayo says Africa should give a "more conscious" look at all available opportunities...***

Among the most pressing challenges facing Africa is that of alleviation of poverty, engendered *inter alia* by food insecurity and sustainable management of agricultural and natural resources.

Indeed, given that the socio-economic activities of various African countries are largely agro-based, the role of weather and climate on sustainable development cannot be overemphasized. In view of this situation therefore, it is important to realize the need to focus attention on policy and operational actions as they relate to concerns over hydrometeorological disasters.

Generally, agriculture is the sector most sensitive to variability in the weather and climate. It is therefore necessary that further work be done to ensure that these concerns are dealt with through improved research and adequate planning. Several of the problems besieging the development of Africa have to do with the negative effects of weather and climate on human life and property.

Over 90 % of all natural disasters of meteorological or hydrological origin

While appreciating the importance of dealing with natural disasters within the framework of climate variability, there should also be a clear appreciation of the potential impacts of climate change, more so nowadays. The issue of climate

change is undoubtedly a major concern because of the expected effects on human welfare and the environments.

In this connection, it is necessary to examine various concerns that have foundations in the understanding of global and regional climates, with a view to making adequate response to present and anticipated future scenarios. One specific area of concern is the likely effect of climate change on the nature, magnitude, spatial coverage and periodicity of disasters of hydrometeorological origin.

Unfortunately, as it were, we have a long way to go as far as the understanding and management of known natural disasters, under the current weather and climate scenario, is concerned.

At this juncture, it is useful to make reference to statistics over the last decades which show that over 90 per cent of all natural disasters are of meteorological or hydrological origin. Africa has been identified as a continent where the effects of weather and climate-related disasters have been most pronounced on the sources of livelihood of the people.

## **Climate change feared to spell more serious problems for Africa**

Furthermore on climate change, the Third Assessment Report (TAR) of the WMO/ UNEP Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has projected that there would be a global warming of 1.4 to 5.8 °C over the next 100 years.

In Africa, climate change is expected to lead to a more vigorous hydrological cycle with the likely results that more severe droughts will occur in some places and floods in others. Small changes in the mean climate can produce relatively large changes in the frequency of extreme weather events such as floods and droughts. Over the coastal zone, a higher sea level combined with increased storm



Dr. Yinka Adebayo

surges and a high tide could lead to extensive coastal flooding as it regularly occurs in coastal cities of West Africa.

Understandably, there are serious concerns that climate change will spell more serious problems for Africa. Droughts of the Sahel in the late 1960s and early 1970s heightened the concern for potential climate change while recent weather and climate-related natural disasters impacting on the lives and property of people are grave enough to focus the attention of scientists and policy makers alike on various weather and climate related issues.

Severe drought has been ravaging many parts of the Horn of Africa, and the eastern and southern parts of the continent in recent years. Other examples of such events in the region include the floods in Mozambique in the year 2000, which reduced its gross national product by more than 10 %. Tropical cyclones are also a constant threat to Indian Ocean island countries.

Again, it is the societies that depend largely on agriculture that will suffer the most, especially as they are less able to cope with vagaries in climatic conditions. The reason, among others, being that there are limited technological know-how, economic (mis)fortune, and problem of adequate capacity of human resources whose skills cannot compete adequately in the global economic market. Most of

Africa falls in that socio-economic bracket.

### **“Essential” scientific issues deserve adequate, continuous attention**

In view of the above, there is the need for ensuring productive collaboration amongst nations, particularly at the level of trade, technology transfer and capacity building.

It is necessary to establish collaboration between those involved in climate change projections, impact assessment and response strategies related to disaster reduction. In this context, it is urgent to implement measures related to environmental planning, data and information pooling, improved observation systems, exchange of information on best practices, strengthened technical cooperation, and close cooperation with policy makers and the private sector.

There are a number of ideas about how to get the right information distilled and passed on to desirable consumers/users. Thus, it is also necessary to consider how the problem of capacity building could be addressed. Perhaps the most important range of issues have to do with finding means for building infrastructure and for conducting training.

Furthermore, based on available scientific evidences, how do we get the policy makers to adopt appropriate and doable policy for implementation? In dealing with these issues with regards to weather, water and climate-related disasters, we need to *inter alia* ensure that we continue to pay adequate attention to the essential scientific issues by supporting the development of infrastructure for early warning and related analysis. Doing contrary is tantamount to leaving human life, property and the environment to the destructive vagaries of nature.

### **The challenge for Africa**

Given the peril of not doing enough to salvage African countries from barrage of socio-economic problems, it is incumbent nowadays on countries to make increasing use of the products from the hydrometeorological community and act with greater efficiency, talk more loudly

about optimization of pending opportunities that are potentially created by favourable conditions of weather and climate.

The challenge and question therefore revolve around the fact that in making contributions to the larger society, policy makers across the board - and technicians alike - should identify where such excellent opportunities exist, with the aim of working out effective strategy for incorporating ways and means to harness them for the optimum benefit of humanity.

In Africa, it is essential that a more conscious look is taken at all available opportunities in view of the fact that over the years, the varied effects of atmospheric conditions have been taken for granted; the reason for this apparent negligence being that humanity and indeed all biological species have learnt to live under different conditions of weather and climate.

However, with increasing effects in economic and technological drivers and rising social sophistication, the world has come to realize that atmospheric resources are not inexhaustible, and they do have great impacts on all aspect of human endeavours and environment.

The challenge nowadays is to work with hydrometeorological services in realizing the wider value of promoting hydrometeorological early warning in various sectors of societal endeavours.

### **New major WMO programme on disaster prevention, mitigation**

One of the most important facilities concerning global cooperation is exemplified through the existence of WMO, with its considerable infrastructure spread over the world, especially in the domain of its 187 member countries (as at 2004), states and territories. Cooperation between WMO members has stimulated better understanding of the conditions of weather, climate and water resources, for the benefit of human welfare and the environment.

Given that a lot more should be done to ensure better coverage of land and ocean in terms of data collection, as well as the need to train human resources to deal with these facilities, there is no doubt that

capacity building remains a critical issue that we need to do something about.

Aware of the rapid growth of these needs, the new major WMO Programme for Natural Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, approved by the 14<sup>th</sup> World Meteorological Congress in 2003, was formulated to play a significant role. It will contribute to identification of major threats as well as the adequate measures to be taken at various levels, and of course do more.

The Programme is also designed to promote the exchange of knowledge and experience. At national level, it will enhance the capabilities of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHS) as an essential part of the national infrastructure for disaster risk reduction and wider socio-economic planning.

### **Africa should make best possible use of new WMO Programme**

The new Programme will also promote the establishment of adequate and synergistic partnerships at international, regional and national level in order to pool the knowledge, experience and skills of the different organizations involved in this field to achieve common objectives.

It will be useful for African countries to make the best possible use of this Programme so that we can, together, attain greater success in delivering our various services at national and international levels.

With the new WMO Programme, we expect better and more impactful response to human needs, especially as regards protection of life, environment and socio-economic development.

It must be noted that there are various ongoing programmes dealing with natural disasters. In this regard, the new Programme is aimed at strengthening the ongoing actions. Arguably, as African countries potentially stand to gain the most from the activities of the new WMO Programme on natural disasters, all stakeholders are called upon to join hands in ensuring its maximum impact on development activities in Africa. ■

1 World Meteorological Organization / United Nations Environment Programme

# Information needs for disaster risk reduction, governance & development in Nigeria

**Prof 'Bola Ayeni**

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*The following is an excerpt from a more comprehensive presentation.*

The cause and effects of disasters, be they natural, technological, biological or arising from internal conflicts within nations, are often influenced by environmental, economic, political and social disposition of the people. Thus, human activities and actions may provoke global catastrophes just as forceful as the 26 December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. The human impact on causing a rise in sea level or increasing deforestation may give unpalatable results. The threats of man-made environmental collapse have become more pressing just as problems of environmental stress arising from overpopulation.

The traditional approach to disaster management has been the delivery of relief after a disaster. Even though disaster relief remains extremely important, the approach alone does not proactively address the need to reduce the human and environmental impacts of future disasters. Recent thinking in the field of disaster management is indicative of the need for a new paradigm that focuses on reducing the risk of disasters and involving local participation in the management of disaster effects (Shaw and Okasaki, 2004).

This emerging paradigm opines that countries and communities need to place more emphasis on a holistic approach to disaster risk reduction. This approach involves risk assessment, risk reduction, early warning and disaster preparedness in order to address the effective reduction of social, economic and environmental costs of disasters.

## **Disaster risk reduction, governance & development nexus**

Disasters are not isolated events but rather are outcomes of processes of risk

accumulations deeply embedded in contemporary and historical development decisions. They result from a combination of hazards which are potentially damaging events or processes, and people's vulnerability to those hazards (DFID, 2004). Although a single hazard may prevail when a disaster occurs, large disaster events are made up of many smaller events triggered by a range of hazards. For instance, landslides or fires may be triggered by impacts of hurricanes or earthquakes. Most hazards are products of development processes. Disasters are increasingly recognized as a potential threat to sustainable development, poverty reduction initiatives and the achievement of a number of development goals.

### **Disaster risk reduction**

Disaster risk reduction seeks to pre-empt a disaster and also to put in place, following a disaster, a rehabilitation process that rebuilds resilience to future disasters. Consequently, disaster risk reduction focuses on policies and practices that minimize disaster losses by addressing interventions in three broad areas of hazard minimization, reducing exposure and susceptibility; and enhancing coping and adaptive capacity.

### **Governance**

Governance refers generally to the set of instruments through which people living in a state and believing in common core values govern themselves by the means of laws, rules and regulations enforced by the state apparatus (UN/ISDR, 2004).

It denotes system of values, policies and institutions by which society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interaction among the state, civil society and the private sector. It also denotes those processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences.

Good governance involves the existence of political commitment and strong

institutions as a key area for the success of effective and sustained disaster risk reduction. Good governance will elevate disaster risk reduction as a policy priority, allocate the necessary resources for disaster risk reduction, enforce implementation of disaster risk reduction measures, assign accountability for failures, and facilitate participation from civil society. Furthermore, good governance will link the economic, political and administrative components of governance more directly with disaster risk reduction through policy and planning, appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks, and through the mobilization of resources, organisations and structures. When good governance is absent, those conditions that make inhabitants willing to emigrate at all costs, to fight over land and other resources, to start civil wars or cause ethnic conflicts and other unrest, set in. These conditions are further aggravated by poverty, overpopulation and environmental stress (Diamond, 2005).

### **Development**

Without going into controversies in the meanings and interpretation of development, we like to see it as referring to situations where economic growth is accompanied by improved living standards. Consequently, development may be seen as improving the society in terms of the provision of social services, acquisition of economic assets, improved productivity and reducing vulnerability (UN/ISDR, 2004). The development-disaster relationship is described in Table 1 below.

The importance of Table 1 lies in its emphasis in highlighting how disaster may limit or promote development depending on how the impacts are handled at the policy and implementation levels of government. When positively pursued, development, as in the case of improving access or introducing new technologies, may reduce risk while the occurrence of disasters may create new opportunities for doing it right.



**Table 1: Development-Disaster Relationship**

<i>Disasters limit or destroy development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destruction of physical assets and loss of production capacity, market access and input materials.</li> <li>• Damage to infrastructure and erosion of livelihoods and savings.</li> <li>• Destruction of health or education infrastructure and development personnel.</li> <li>• Deaths, disablement or migration of productive labour force.</li> </ul>
<i>Development causes disaster risk</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsustainable development practices that create unsafe working conditions and degrade the environment.</li> <li>• Development paths generating inequality, promoting social isolation or political exclusion</li> </ul>
<i>Development reduces disaster risk</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to safe drinking water and food and secure dwelling which increase people's resilience.</li> <li>• Fair trade and technology can reduce poverty, and social security can reduce vulnerability.</li> <li>• Development can build communities and broaden the provision of opportunities for participation and involvement in decision-making, recognising excluded groups such as women, enhancing education and health capacity.</li> </ul>
<i>Disasters create development opportunities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favourable environment for advocacy for disaster risk reduction measures.</li> <li>• Decision makers more willing to allocate resources in the wake of a disaster.</li> <li>• Rehabilitation and reconstruction activities create</li> <li>• Opportunities for integrating disaster risk measures.</li> </ul>

*Adopted from "Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge for Development" (UNDP 2004, p.20)*

The issues raised in Table 1 above help to harmonise and systematise the various elements required for comprehensive disaster risk reduction. Besides serving as a set of criteria for benchmarking the effectiveness of disaster risk reduction measures and a tool for monitoring progress, these discussions are indicative of the range of data and information required for disaster risk reduction, governance and development.

### The place of information

It has been stated that a new paradigm for conceptualizing disaster management is required and that such a paradigm will see risk reduction as its focus without neglecting elements of relief provision and quick response. This new paradigm (see Ariyabandu et al, 2005) will see disasters as part of ecology that should be managed rather than controlled. Furthermore, it will treat disasters as issues of development and governance and will make states and local government areas responsive, sensitive and accountable to the demands, needs and rights of disaster-prone communities and areas.

Consequently, disaster management policies will be redirected towards vulnerability reduction instead of mere compensation and relief responses. Disaster management strategies will integrate structural measures (construction of embankments, dykes, resistant buildings etc.) with non-

structural measures such as enhancing the entitlements and negotiating power of the most vulnerable communities and subordinate groups. Finally, disaster-prone communities will be engaged equitably into the process of disaster-related decision-making and development planning, implementation and monitoring.

Risk reduction and vulnerability studies will take a pride of place in disaster management and their complex and multifaceted nature that requires analysis and solutions from social, economic and environmental perspectives will become prominent.

The first step in identifying the information needs of natural hazard-related risk would then be undertaken as part of the environmental review process which will involve bringing together information on potential hazards and probabilities of occurrence and undertaking an initial vulnerability assessment. Ideally, environmental analysis in respect of hazards would include collation of basic hazard data at the local, state, regional and national levels. Assessment of natural hazards and related vulnerability would then be conducted as part of all other forms of project appraisal. Full environmental impact assessment would be required for new projects in high-risk areas.

Work would be needed to strengthen communications, dialogue and the sharing of information on vulnerability and risk reduction initiatives and

responsibilities within agencies responsible for hazard and disaster management. These agencies concerned would need to establish some form of focal points with responsibility for providing general guidance on appraising and addressing natural hazard-related risks and disseminating information accordingly.

### Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Information needs will be emphasized in disaster reduction and methods of collecting and analyzing data for monitoring and evaluating risk reduction activities will be developed. In particular, guidance is required on the identification of appropriate indicators for the many different forms that disaster reduction can take.

Nonetheless, early warning and information systems are key tools for mitigating the impacts of disasters. Much progress is yet to be made in Nigeria for improving systems for providing short-term advance information on extreme weather events, flood surges, volcanic eruptions and food crises which allow timely action to be taken towards the management of disasters. In addition, there is also a need for information systems to support longer-term risk assessment and monitoring, focusing on vulnerability as well as hazards, as a basis for disaster risk reduction initiatives within a development framework.

The considerable effort that went into food security early warning systems in many parts of Africa, have become generally effective in providing timely assessments of seasonal conditions for crops and pastures, generating national food balance estimates, and more recently identifying outcomes for different livelihood groups. While this remains a commendable achievement, it is indicative that one can achieve similar results in the case of other hazards and disasters where an important function of early warning systems would be to communicate warnings directly to affected populations.

The integration of early warning systems with public alerts, evacuation and emergency response systems across sectors will become crucial for disaster management. To this extent, systems should be community-based as they are more effective than top-down centralised systems because they can be more directly integrated into local response and risk reduction strategies. While early warning and information systems have become quite useful, a major shortcoming however, is their potential to generate or acquire large volumes of data, including remote sensing data, and inherent weakness at analysis and interpretation and sometimes weaker still at communicating their findings to stakeholders in a useful form which could lead to action.

Nonetheless, disaster risk reduction recognises and accords due pride of place to data collection, processing and storage for real-time retrieval and input into the conception, planning, implementation and impact assessment of any environmentally-related development projects.

Along these lines, a matrix of information and knowledge about the various perspectives over space and time as well as appreciation of the inherent interactions with one another is required.

The determination of information needs is therefore a fundamental requirement for beneficial incorporation of resource and environmental information into the disaster risk reduction, government and development processes. Sustainable development requires technical and scientifically sound environmental information on the nature, location, extent, quality, capacity, rate of use and

the impacts of natural and human-induced changes.

### Data requirements

The interdependent nature of issues under discussion demand inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral solutions, which in turn require the collection, integration and management of a variety of data. The data requirements for studies on disaster reduction, governance and development include but not limited to the following:

- a) Maps which provide basic information on the political, topographic, hydrographic, demographic, etc of regions, states and local government areas;
- b) Inventories of biophysical components of the environment, e.g. soils, water, vegetation, geology, climate, etc to provide benchmark information about location, extent, properties and characteristics of the component;
- c) Information on the current use, capability and the resource management systems required;
- d) Information on human development activities which lead to dynamic changes in the state of natural and environmental resources and which more often than not culminate in the inducement of hazards and generation of disasters;
- e) Monitoring parameters to determine or identify, over time, both positive and negative impacts generated by development activities and governance on risk reduction and disaster management.

The magnitude of data required to generate relevant information and the multitude of interests to be satisfied in order to make plans for sustainable disaster risk reduction requires the development of geo-information technologies such as Remote Sensing, Global Positioning System (GPS) and Geographic Information System (GIS). These geo-information technologies are complemented by the related satellite communication technology, which enhances information transmission. Recent developments at NEMA (National Emergency Management Agency), the setting up of the Mission Control Centre,

and the setting up of a full-fledged Geographic Information Systems Laboratory has positioned the Agency to benefit tremendously from the use of these technologies. This however, is the time and the opportunity to begin to emphasize the need for capacity building in the Agency in general and the Department of Planning, Research and Forecasting in particular to appreciate the changing focus of disaster management and the benefits which these modern technologies provide.

### Conclusion

This paper clearly indicates the need for systematic data collection and presentation in form of hazard and disaster information, profiles and maps. Focusing on creating information systems for disaster and hazard management will lead to the development of disaster-related hazard, vulnerability and risk assessment tools which will enable periodic reporting on the exposure to natural hazards on the one hand; and patterns and trends or changes in the exposure on the other. These developments will assist the evolution of an integrated disaster hazard and vulnerability information network needed by various levels of government, the private sector, and the general public and by all stakeholders.

The information system will facilitate research on factors contributing to disaster hazard and vulnerability and measures to alleviate vulnerability to them. It will lead to the development of methodologies for the analysis of disaster-related hazard, and to vulnerability and risk indicators. It will enable the dissemination of research results and methodologies through disaster information networks and other channels to promote increased awareness and preparedness to natural and man-made hazards.

Furthermore, by providing information on the physical and socio-economic characteristics of the people and the areas of the existence of the hazards and the occurrence of disasters, the information system can generate an atlas that shows the occurrence of disasters in this country and in its sub-area units (states and local government areas). Such an atlas will provide guidance to

government and people of Nigeria on the incidence of disasters. It will also show what the major consequences have been; generate awareness and preparedness for the hazards and how to combat them. ■

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# Tsunami potential on East African coast, western Indian Ocean island states

### Dr Chris Hartnady

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***There are a steep continental slope and isolated oceanic island volcanoes in Western Indian Ocean, WIO. Do their adjacent parts present local and regional tsunami hazards to the East African coast and WIO island states? Earth scientist Dr Chris Hartnady says the short answer is 'Yes'...***

Following the giant  $M_w$  9.3 Sumatra-Andaman earthquake of 26 December 2004, and the subsequent devastating tsunami within the Indian Ocean, more particularly its eastern and northern shores, a key question arises for African earth scientists: Do adjacent parts of the steep continental slope and isolated oceanic island volcanoes in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) present local and regional tsunami hazards to the East African coast and WIO island states? The short answer is 'Yes!'

There are three significant classes of tsunami source in the WIO, namely: 1) subduction-related thrust faulting in the Makran zone between the Arabian and Eurasian plates (*upper rectangle*; Figure 1); 2) large-scale submarine landsliding on steep continental margins, generally inherited from large-scale transform boundaries during the early

evolution of the (proto-) Indian Ocean (*rectangles*; Figure 1); and 3) flank eruption or collapse of active oceanic island or "hotspot" volcanoes in the WIO (*circles*; Figure 1).

### 1945 tsunami from Makran zone left 4,000 dead

Following a great  $M_w$  8.0 earthquake, the Makran zone was the source of a tsunami on 28 November 1945. The tsunami reached a height of over 10 m along the Pakistan coast and at Kutch, Gujarat, India. The fishing village of Khudi, some

30 miles west of Karachi (Pakistan), was completely obliterated. In all, over 4,000 people were killed by the earthquake and/or tsunami.

While the Makran zone has been tsunamigenic in historical times, the tsunami potential of the other sources must be gauged from geological and marine-geophysical evidence. The two areas of potentially large-scale submarine landsliding are: 1) the Kerimbas Graben zone, along the continental margin of southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique; and 2) the Wild Coast

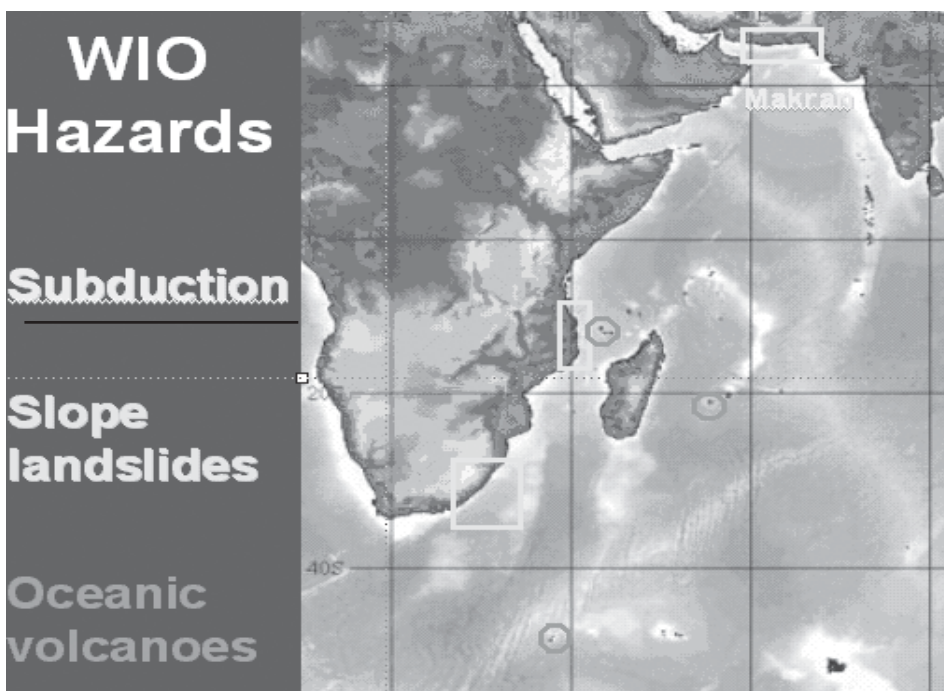


Figure 1 Sources of tsunami hazard in Western Indian Ocean. See text for explanation.



Mega-slump zone, off the South African coast between the provinces of Kwazulu-Natal and Eastern Cape. Submarine slumping has actually been indirectly observed around the Kerimbass zone: the major  $M_s 7.4$  earthquake on 13 December 1910 (Ambraseys, 1991) in the far-inland area around southern Lake Tanganyika and Lake Rukwa caused unseen slumps and turbidity currents that cut the Beira-to-Dar es Salaam telegraph cable in five places. However, no *tsunami* wave was observed, or at least it was not recorded, along the adjacent coastline.

The potential for future large-scale landsliding in the Kerimbass Graben (*northern green rectangle*; Figure 1) is based on the conjunction of: 1) the relative steepness of the continental slope, which was formed as a strike-slip or transform-faulted margin during the opening of the Somali Basin between Africa and Madagascar (Martin and Hartnady, 1986); 2) the seismic re-activation of this Davie Fracture Zone as part of the developing Somalia-Rovuma plate boundary (Hartnady, 2002; Calais et al., 2005); and 3) increased Late Pleistocene-Holocene sedimentation rate around the continental shelf delta of the Rovuma River due to enhanced uplift and erosion around its rift-valley headwaters. Moreover, there is seismic-reflection evidence of geologically recent deformation at the foot of the continental slope, i.e., huge *chevauchements gravitaires* (gravitational thrusts; Raillard, 1990).

### Comoros volcano of greatest concern

Dingle (1977) first reported marine-geophysical evidence for large-scale, recent submarine landsliding on the continental slope off the South African Wild Coast (*southern green rectangle*; Figure 1). The structures appear in seismic-reflection profiles for offshore oil exploration (Ben-Avraham et al., 1998, Fig. 5). The *RV Professor Logachev* research cruise (Hartnady et al., 1992) provided further seismic-reflection profiles across their outer margins (Niemi et al., 2000; Reznikov et al., 2005, Fig. 4-7). This area represents an offshore extension or propagation of the southern

Nubia-Somalia plate boundary (Hartnady, 2002).

The third class of *tsunami* hazard is related to the active, intra-plate ocean-island volcanoes in the WIO, namely Karthala in the Comoros, Piton de la Fournaise on Reunion Island, and Marion, some 2,000 km south of Cape Town, South Africa (*three red circles*; Figure 1, in order north to south respectively). Of these, Karthala is presently of greatest concern. During its recent eruption (17-19 April 2005), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Situation Report (No 1 dated 18 April) noted that, *inter alia*, Comoros authorities were concerned about a possible “subterranean lava flow [that] may spew in the sea and increase the dimension of a small island which has emerged at 15 km off the coast during recent months”.

The existing hydrographic chart covering the Comoros Archipelago, i.e. British Admiralty BA563 dated 1993, shows the Recif Vailheu reef reaching to within 5 m below sea level, approximately 15 km of the west coast of the Grande Comore island shoreline. It is presumably this feature that “emerged” as a “small island”.

### Urgent field investigation required

Evidently at least 5 m of vertical uplift has occurred here within the last decade, without any obvious expression of submarine lava effusion (steam, discolouration, etc.), which seems to imply that there has been a substantial recent inflation of a deeper magma chamber beneath the steep and topographically complex western flank of the volcanic massif. Given the known *tsunami* hazard associated with flank eruption/collapse of large (sub)marine volcanoes, and the proximity of major East African port cities to this area (maximum warning times to Pemba, Dar es Salaam and Mombasa being < 0.5 hr, ~1 hr and ~1.5 hr respectively; Figure 2), the situation seems to require urgent field investigation, both land-based and ship-based.

In the aftermath of the 26 December 2004 Indian Ocean catastrophe, it is important that planners of the proposed Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS) do not find themselves in the position of the “army that is always preparing to fight the last war”. The next

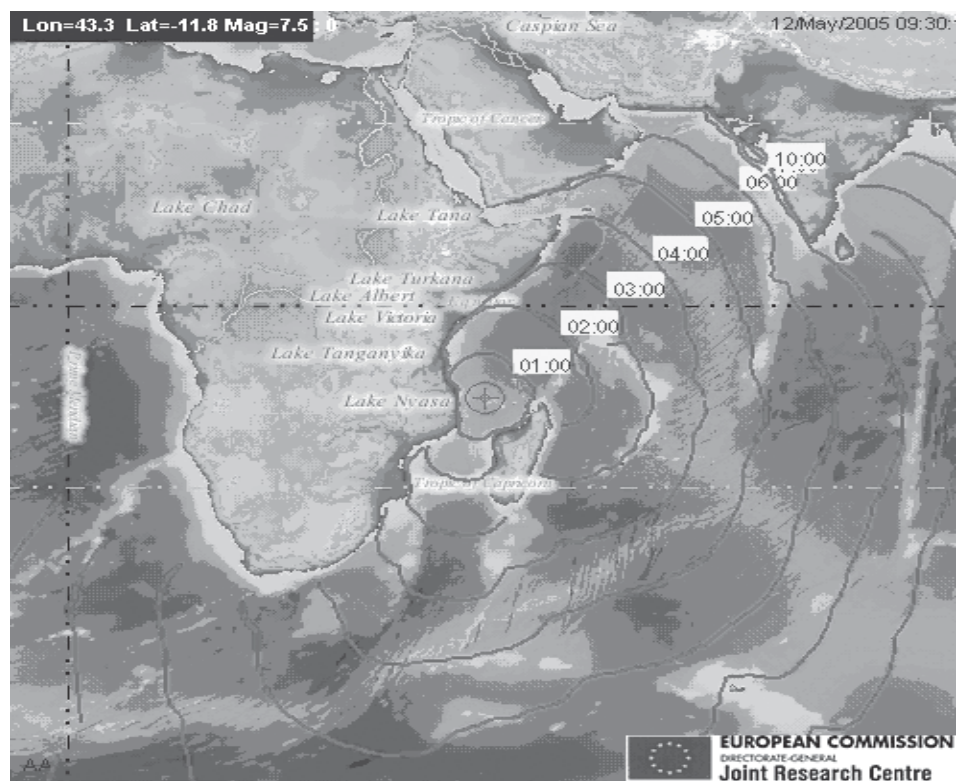


FIGURE 2. Tsunami model for submarine flank collapse west of Karthala Volcano; Hartnady, Annunziato and Best, in preparation. Red isochrons at 1 hr intervals from origin time. See European Commission Joint Research Centre web site (<http://tsunami.jrc.it/model/Reports/16340/report.asp?id=16340>).

*tsunami* disaster in this region may have a different origin, not related to another subduction-megathrust event along the eastern India or Australia plate boundaries. The IOTWS development will have to be comprehensive in nature, and take into account also the WIO sources discussed here. ■

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# World Conference on Disaster Reduction & its outcomes

### ISDR Secretariat

Geneva, Switzerland

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) was held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005. The Conference had over 4,000 participants representing 168 countries, 78 observer organizations, 161 NGOs and about 154 media organizations. The conference took stock of progress accomplished in disaster risk reduction since the Yokohama Conference of 1994 and to make plans for the next 10 years.

The WCDR was composed of three main processes: Intergovernmental segment, thematic segment and Public Forum.

### Intergovernmental segment

The Intergovernmental segment, with delegations from more than 160 UN Member States, provided the venue for delegates to make general statements on the issues of disaster reduction. In addition to the Plenary, a Main Committee (Drafting Committee) was held for negotiation and drafting purposes. The chairperson of the Drafting Committee presented the final texts of the negotiated outcome documents (Hyogo Framework of Action, and the Hyogo Declaration) to the Conference on the last day of the Conference for adoption by the WCDR.



Opening Ceremony of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) in Kobe Japan

### Thematic segment

The Thematic Segment was formatted to complement the discussions on the programme outcome at intergovernmental level.

The Thematic segment consisted of three High-level Round Tables and a number of Thematic Sessions clustered under five Thematic Panels, as well as Regional Sessions. A large number of events took place under this segment, which provided the substantive part of the Conference, in

all areas related to disaster risk reduction.

The panels were led by government representatives with the support of agencies.

### Public forum

The Public forum, open to the general public and Conference participants, consisted of Workshops, Exhibition booths, and Poster Sessions. With approximately 40,000 general participants and visitors, the Public Forum provided



opportunities to promote organizations' own activities through presentations, posters and a public exhibition, engaging in open debates, seminars and a variety of events. Organizers included governments, UN agencies, international organizations, NGOs, technical institutions and the private sector.

## Objectives

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction was convened by decision of the UN General Assembly, with five specific objectives:

- (a) To conclude and report on the review of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action, with a view to updating the Guiding Framework on Disaster Reduction for the 21st century;
- (b) To identify specific activities aimed at ensuring the implementation of relevant provisions of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development on vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management;
- (c) To share good practices and lessons learned to further disaster reduction within the context of attaining sustainable development, and to identify gaps and challenges;
- (d) To increase awareness of the importance of disaster reduction policies, thereby facilitating and promoting the implementation of those policies;
- (e) To increase the reliability and availability of appropriate disaster-related information to the public and disaster management agencies in all regions, as set out in relevant provisions of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

## Expected outcome

Taking these objectives into account, and drawing on the conclusions of the review of the Yokohama Strategy, States and other actors participating in the World Conference on Disaster Reduction resolve to pursue the following expected outcome for the next 10 years: the substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries.

The realization of this outcome will require the full commitment and involvement of all actors concerned, including governments, regional and international organizations, civil society including volunteers, the private sector and the scientific community.

## The Yokohama Strategy: lessons learned and gaps identified

The Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action ("Yokohama Strategy"), adopted in 1994, provides landmark guidance on reducing disaster risk and the impacts of disasters.

The review of progress made in implementing the Yokohama Strategy identifies major challenges for the coming years in ensuring more systematic action to address disaster risks in the context of sustainable development and in building resilience through enhanced national and local capabilities to manage and reduce risk.

The review stresses the importance of disaster risk reduction being underpinned by a more pro-active approach to informing, motivating and involving people in all aspects of disaster risk reduction in their own local communities. It also highlights the scarcity of resources allocated specifically from development budgets for the realization of risk reduction objectives, either at the national or the regional level or through international cooperation and financial mechanisms, while noting the significant

potential to better exploit existing resources and established practices for more effective disaster risk reduction.

Specific gaps and challenges are identified in the following five main areas: (a) Governance: organizational, legal and policy frameworks; (b) Risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning; (c) Knowledge management and education; (d) Reducing underlying risk factors; (e) Preparedness for effective response and recovery.

These are the key areas for developing a relevant framework for action for the decade 2005–2015.

## Outcomes of the WCDR

The following four documents were the main outcome of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. They represent a strong commitment of the international community to address disaster reduction and engage in a determined, result-oriented plan of action for the next decade:

1. Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World
2. Hyogo Declaration (See full text on next page)
3. Hyogo Framework of Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters
4. Common Statement of the Special Session on the Indian Ocean Disaster: Risk Reduction for a Safer Future ■

For more information on the WCDR and its outcomes, please visit [www.un.org/wcdr/](http://www.un.org/wcdr/)



Panel during the thematic session reports



# Hyogo Declaration

We, delegates to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, have gathered from 18 to 22 January 2005 in Kobe City of Japan's Hyogo Prefecture, which has demonstrated a remarkable recovery from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 17 January 1995.

We express our sincere condolences and sympathy to, and solidarity with, the people and communities adversely affected by disasters, particularly those devastated by the unprecedented earthquake and tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean on 26 December 2004.

We commend the efforts made by them, their Governments and the international community to respond to and overcome this tragedy. In response to the Special Leaders' Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations on the Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami, held in Jakarta on 6 January 2005, we commit ourselves to assisting them, including with respect to appropriate measures pertinent to disaster reduction. We also believe that lessons learned from this disaster are relevant to other regions. In this connection, a special session on the recent earthquake and tsunami disaster, convened at the World Conference to review that disaster from a risk reduction perspective, delivered the Common Statement of the Special Session on

*Indian Ocean Disaster: Risk Reduction for a Safer Future as its outcome.*

We recognize that the international community has accumulated much experience with disaster risk reduction through the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and the succeeding International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. In particular, by taking concrete measures in line with the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World, we have learned much, including about gaps and challenges since the 1994 Yokohama Conference. Nevertheless, we are deeply concerned that communities continue to experience excessive losses of precious human lives and valuable property as well as serious injuries and major displacements due to various disasters worldwide.

We are convinced that disasters seriously undermine the results of development investments in a very short time, and therefore, remain a major impediment to sustainable development and poverty eradication. We are also cognizant that development investments that fail to appropriately consider disaster risks could increase vulnerability. Coping with and reducing disasters so as to enable and strengthen nations' sustainable development is, therefore, one of the most critical challenges facing the international community.

We are determined to reduce disaster losses of lives and other social, economic and environmental assets worldwide, mindful of the importance of international cooperation, solidarity and partnership, as well as good governance at all levels. We reaffirm the vital role of the United Nations system in disaster risk reduction.

*Thus, we declare the following:*

1. We will build upon relevant international commitments and frameworks, as well as internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, to strengthen global disaster reduction activities for the twenty-first century. Disasters have a tremendous detrimental impact on efforts at all levels to eradicate global poverty; the impact of disasters remains a significant challenge to sustainable development.
2. We recognize the intrinsic relationship between disaster reduction, sustainable development and poverty eradication, among others, and the importance of involving all stakeholders, including governments, regional and international organizations and financial institutions, civil society, including non- governmental organizations and volunteers, the private sector and the scientific community. We therefore welcome all the relevant events that took place and contributions made in the course of the Conference and its preparatory process.
3. We recognize as well that a culture of disaster prevention and resilience, and associated pre-disaster strategies, which are sound investments, must be fostered at all levels, ranging from the individual to the international levels. Human societies have to live with the risk of hazards posed by nature. However, we are far from powerless to prepare for and mitigate the impact of disasters. We can and must alleviate the suffering from hazards by reducing the vulnerability of societies. We can and must further build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters through people-centered early warning systems, risks assessments, education and other proactive, integrated, multi-hazard, and multi-sectoral approaches and activities in the context of the disaster reduction cycle, which consists of prevention, preparedness, and emergency response, as well as recovery and rehabilitation. Disaster risks, hazards, and their impacts pose a threat, but appropriate response to these can and should lead to actions to reduce risks and vulnerabilities in the future.
4. We affirm that States have the primary responsibility to protect the people and property on their territory from hazards, and thus, it is vital to give high priority to disaster risk reduction in national policy, consistent with their capacities and the resources available to them. We concur that strengthening community level capacities to reduce disaster risk at the local level is especially needed, considering that appropriate disaster reduction measures at that level enable the communities and individuals to reduce significantly their vulnerability to hazards. Disasters remain a major threat to the survival, dignity, livelihood and security of peoples and communities, in particular the poor. Therefore there is an urgent need to enhance the capacity of disaster-prone developing countries in particular, the least developed countries and small island developing States, to reduce the impact of

disasters, through strengthened national efforts and enhanced bilateral, regional and international cooperation, including through technical and financial assistance.

5. We, therefore, adopt, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters with its expected outcome, strategic goals, and priorities for action, as well as implementation strategies and associated follow-up, as a guiding framework for the next decade on disaster reduction.
6. We believe that it is critically important that the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters be translated into concrete actions at all levels and that achievements are followed up through the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in order to reduce disaster risks and vulnerabilities. We also recognize the need to develop indicators to track progress on disaster risk reduction activities as appropriate to particular circumstances and capacities as part of the effort to realize the expected outcome and strategic goals set in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. We underscore the importance of strengthening cooperative and synergistic interactions among various stakeholders and promoting voluntary partnerships for disaster reduction. We also resolve to further develop information sharing mechanisms on programmes, initiatives, best practices, lessons learnt and technologies in support of disaster risk reduction so that the international community can share the results of and benefits from these efforts.
7. We now call for action from all stakeholders, seeking the contributions of those with relevant specific competences and experiences, aware that the realization of the outcomes of the World Conference depends on our unceasing and tireless collective efforts, and a strong political will, as well as a shared responsibility and investment, to make the world safer from the risk of disasters within the next decade for the benefit of the present and future generations.
8. We express our most profound appreciation to the Government and people of Japan for hosting the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, and thank particularly the people of Hyogo Prefecture for their hospitality.■

## CENTRAL ASIA: Second regional consultative meeting on disaster risk reduction held for Central Asian countries

**Ms Tine Ramstad**  
UN/ISDR Central Asia,  
Dushanbe, Tajikistan

The “*Second Regional Consultative Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction for Central Asian Countries*” was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 24 to 26 May 2005.

Based on the “Hyogo Declaration” and “Hyogo Framework of Action for 2005-2015 - Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters” adopted at the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR II) held in Kobe, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005, the participants recognized the need of taking responsibility for effective disaster risk reduction measures.

The participants agreed that the primary

aim would be to protect the population, infrastructure and territories, keeping in mind the growing global interdependence and the fact that international cooperation and knowledge sharing, experience and innovative technologies are all factors contributing to securing sustainable reduction of losses in lives and in social, economical and environmental assets threatened by emergency situations.

It is to be noted that Central Asia’s First Regional Consultative Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction was held on 1 and 2 December 2004 in the Tajik capital, Dushanbe, a few weeks after the UN/ISDR regional outreach office for Central Asia was established in the same city.

At the end of the three-day meeting, the participants made the following recommendations.

### Recommendations

1. Government agencies responsible for emergency prevention and liquidation policy, together with regional and national organizations operating in the Central Asian region, should aim at adopting the guidelines set out in the Hyogo Declaration and Hyogo Framework of Action to ensure their implementation is in line with their specific conditions and respective capacities.

These documents define the following:

#### *Expected outcomes*

Sustainable reduction of losses, in lives and in the social, economical and environmental assets brought about by disasters.

#### *Strategic goals*

A more effective integration of disaster risk

reduction into sustainable development policies and planning;

Development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities to build resilience to hazards;

The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into development and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes.

## Priority action areas

- Ensuring that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a sound institutional framework for its implementation.
  - Identification, assessment and monitoring of disaster risk factors and improvement of early warning.
  - Utilization of knowledge, innovative solutions and education to create safe conditions and resilience capacity at all levels.
  - Reduction of baseline risk factors.
  - Enhancement of disaster preparedness to ensure effective response at all levels.
2. Approve the draft Recommendations of the Second Regional Consultative Meeting of Central Asian Countries, submitted by the Tajik delegation. Government agencies of the Central Asian countries responsible for policy implementation in the area of emergency prevention and liquidation:
- To review the draft Recommendations and submit their proposals to the UN/ISDR office within one month;
  - To take account of the said Recommendations while developing national platforms in the area of disaster risk reduction as well as national coordination mechanisms and national plans, and:
  - Ensure the implementation of the follow-up activities aimed at supporting strategic objectives and prioritized areas for 2005-2015 on the basis of a multisectoral approach, mutual coordination and constructive cooperation;
  - Integrate factors related to disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies and planning at all levels;
  - Facilitate a closer strategic coordination of disaster risk reduction on the basis of



*Participants at the Central Asian regional consultative meeting*

the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), strengthen the capacity of regional mechanisms and organizations for the development of regional plans, advocacy, coordination, exchange of information and know-how, science-based monitoring of hazards and vulnerabilities, and institutional capacity development to address disaster risk issues.

## *Under the priority action area 1 of the Hyogo Framework of Action for 2005-2015*

Recommend government agencies of Central Asian countries responsible for policy implementation in the area of emergency prevention and liquidation:

- To review the suitability of the development and adoption of laws on “protection against earthquakes”;
- To pay attention to the need to further develop and harmonize national legislation in the sphere of emergencies and bring it in conformity with international regulations and standards in order to promote integration processes between countries;
- To review the need for changes and amendments in the existing intergovernmental agreements and the expediency of developing new intergovernmental agreements in the sphere of emergency prevention and liquidation, and submit proposals in a manner prescribed by the national legislation.

## *Under the priority action area 5 of the Hyogo Framework of Action for 2005-2015*

- Approve the initiative of the Republic of Kazakhstan’s Ministry for Emergencies to establish the proposed Central Asian Disaster Response Coordination Centre in Kazakhstan, and take notice that detailed practical proposals and activities related to establishment of the above centre will be submitted by Kazakhstan for discussion and review during the next (third) regional consultative meeting of Central Asian countries.
- The Republic of Kazakhstan’s Ministry for Emergencies shall submit within one month proposals on the structure and working plans for the initial phase of operations of the proposed Central Asian Disaster Response Coordination Centre for review by the other Central Asian countries’ ministries for emergencies.

## *Accept the proposal of the Kyrgyz delegation to hold the Third Regional Consultative Meeting in Kyrgyzstan*

The participants hereby call upon all stakeholders to boost their activities and urge them to make their contributions towards the implementation of the strategic objectives and prioritized areas set out in the Hyogo Declaration and Hyogo Framework of Action. The resulting document was adopted at the 25 May plenary session. ■



# UN/ISDR opens Asia and the Pacific regional outreach programme

## Ms Christel Rose

Regional Programme Officer,  
UN/ISDR Asia and Pacific,  
Bangkok, Thailand

UN/ISDR opens a regional outreach programme for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand, as a direct follow-up to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (January 2005, Kobe, Japan) and the 26 December 2004 tragedy. UN/ISDR Asia-Pacific is hosted by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

History has shown that the Asia-Pacific region is the most disaster prone area in the world. Witness in 2004, the floods in Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia and the Philippines, the cyclones in Japan and Vietnam, the earthquakes in Indonesia, Iran and Japan and the catastrophic 26

December 2004 tsunami that struck countries of the Indian Ocean. The high urban population density, the uneven level of development within and between countries and the extent of poverty further exacerbate the cumulative impact of disasters on sustainable development in Asian countries.

People of the Asia-Pacific Region are alert, well informed and extremely active in disaster risk reduction issues. Significant multi-hazard initiatives are indeed currently taking place at the regional level, supported by an increased number of bilateral and multilateral donors, UN agencies, regional and national organizations and NGOs, among others. Needless to say that the 26 December tsunami has heightened even further the high-level activity, public awareness and receptiveness to disaster-related matters in the region.

ISDR Asia-Pacific is intended to serve as a framework to facilitate, promote and advocate for the strengthening of disaster reduction capacities in the region. This is being done in collaboration with the Asian Partnership on Disaster Reduction comprising of UNDP, OCHA, UNESCAP, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) and Asian Disaster Reduction Centre (ADRC). It works closely with key regional and national stakeholders such as the United Nations system in the region, governments, local communities, the media and NGOs in facilitating the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action to promote disaster risk reduction as well as the Early Warning Tsunami System Programme for the Indian Ocean.■

For more information, please direct requests to chung2@un.org or rosec@un.org.

## 2005 WORLD DISASTER REDUCTION AWARENESS CAMPAIGN Focus on Microfinance Tools & Safety Nets

## Ms Brigitte Leoni

ISDR Secretariat,  
Geneva, Switzerland

***This year, the theme of the ISDR International Day for Disaster Reduction and campaign aims at increasing disaster resilience using microfinance and safety nets. Our objective is two-fold: to sensitise the social and financial communities and institutions on their potential role in reducing disaster risk, and to raise awareness in the disaster and risk management community of the utility of existing financial tools and safety nets to reduce the vulnerability of hazard-prone populations.***

Hazards are a major risk for the poor and marginalized, who are already the most vulnerable in society; the destruction of property and livelihoods furthers their downward cycle of poverty. The recent tsunami and earthquakes in the Indian Ocean are a tragic example of disaster vulnerability and how communities can be reduced to extreme poverty in a matter of hours.

Investing in disaster risk reduction reduces the vulnerability of people to hazards and helps break the vicious cycle of poverty.

To achieve the **Millennium Development Goals** and reduce poverty before 2015, we must find mechanisms that work and actively implement them.

Micro-credit has proven its value in many countries as a weapon against poverty and hunger. With access to micro-credit, people with low incomes can earn more and better protect themselves against unexpected setbacks and losses. Micro-credit and microfinance in general are not yet fully utilized as tools for reducing disaster impacts, but some concrete experiences in India and Bangladesh have shown their potential and highlight the need to further explore these opportunities.

The use of microfinance for disaster risk management is still somewhat experimental, but communities should explore its various flexible approaches and impacts for poverty reduction.

The UN General Assembly designated the year 2005 as the International Year of Micro-Credit (Resolution 53/197), stating that the Year will provide an important opportunity to give impetus to microfinance programmes throughout the world.

The five key objectives for the Year are designed to unite Member States, UN Agencies and Microfinance Partners. To ultimately achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Year aims to:

1. Assess and promote the contribution of microfinance and micro-credit to the MDGs;
2. Increase public awareness and understanding of microfinance and micro-credit as vital parts of the development equation;
3. Promote inclusive financial sectors;
4. Support sustainable access to financial services, and
5. Encourage innovation and new partnerships by promoting and supporting strategic partnerships to build and expand the outreach and success of micro-credit and microfinance.

Within the International Year of Micro-Credit 2005, the ISDR Secretariat and partners would like to stimulate a debate and promote dialogue on how safety nets, micro-credit and micro-insurance can contribute to disaster risk reduction. In contributing to the campaign, UN/ISDR will:

- Encourage partners and experts to review the available safety nets to address vulnerability and poverty reduction, and look for potential new mechanisms that can reduce the impact of hazards.
- Promote national and local roundtables with microfinance institutions, commercial banks, insurance companies, NGOs, CBOs and disaster reduction experts.
- Invite national platforms for disaster reduction and other local and national counterparts to discuss and develop programmes of social and economic safety nets for the poor to increase their resilience and recovery capacity to disasters.



(Photo Imagine GTZ: Thomas, Kenya)

- Collect good practice and experiences: you are invited to send us your case studies and experiences to be included in our information products and media briefs.
- Invite decision-makers and NGOs involved in recovery efforts for the Indian Ocean tsunami and earthquakes to develop capacities for long-term disaster risk reduction. Please share with us your views on how microfinance and safety nets could be useful tools in the recovery process.

To broaden the basis of knowledge and innovation, we encourage nominations of candidates with relevant experience and good practice related to microfinance, poverty reduction, safety nets and disaster reduction to apply for the 2005 nomination process of the Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction.

The ISDR Secretariat, in collaboration with other UN agencies and NGOs working on microfinance, will contribute to the International Year of Micro-Credit, organising events throughout the world that will culminate with the International Day for Disaster Reduction on the 12th of October 2005. ■

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) are coordinating the Year and organizing a series of events throughout the world. For more information about the campaign, please see: <http://www.yearofmicrocredit.org>



(Photo imagine GTZ: Peter, Kenya)

# UGANDA begins implementation of Hyogo Framework of Action & Africa Regional Strategy

## Mr Martin Owor

Assistant Commissioner,  
Ministry of Disaster Preparedness and  
Refugees,  
ISDR National Focal Point,  
Kampala, Uganda

**The Government of Uganda recognizes that disaster risk reduction interventions are development activities and that development strategies and programmes need to be disaster risk sensitive to avoid/ minimize the negative impacts of natural and man-made hazards on its citizens' livelihoods.**

## Information paper submitted to Parliament, cabinet paper submitted to Cabinet Secretariat

Following the conclusion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR II) in January 2005, an information paper on its outcomes was prepared by the National Focal Point and submitted to Parliament and all relevant Government Ministries. A Cabinet Paper recommending to Government to adapt the five priority actions of the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) 2005-2015 alongside the six strategic goals of the AU/NEPAD Africa Plan of Action, was submitted to the Cabinet Secretariat for consideration.

On his return from the WCDR II, the 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Disaster Preparedness briefed the President of Republic and requested him to bring the recommendations of the HFA to the agenda of the July 2005 Africa Union Summit due in Tripoli, Libya.

## Public awareness conducted on Hyogo Framework of Action

Immediately after the WCDR II, a meeting was held with the media staff who participated in the "Workshop on Media & Disaster Risk Reduction for East & Southern African Journalists" held in Nairobi in December 2004 (see article on



Mr. Felix Osike, editor of New Vision, Uganda and Mr. Martin Owor who is also the Ugandan National focal point

page 39). Then the media personnel developed public awareness programmes about the HFA on the electronic and print media in Uganda.

The national focal point for disaster risk reduction in Uganda, Mr Martin Owor, who also participated in the WCDR II, was interviewed on state-owned Radio Uganda, which covers the whole country, on a live call-in talk show where listeners called in with questions about the HFA and answers instantly given.

Articles on HFA were also published in leading newspapers, and there were a number of discussions among the media personnel on local FM radio stations.

## Action plan being developed to mainstream HFA priorities

The Government of Uganda, with the support of UNDP, has contracted two consultants to develop a result-oriented plan of action for implementation of the strategic goals and priorities of the HFA. The consultants will serve for a period of 12 months, providing support to the Office of the Prime Minister's Department of Disaster Management in adapting and steering the implementation of the HFA by mainstreaming the five priorities of the HFA

into programmes and plans for the responsible line ministries.

The Uganda National Platform for Disaster Reduction, that meets every month, has dedicated two of its meetings to discuss the activities underlying each of the five priorities of action of the HFA. The two consultants are working with relevant line ministries to identify those already being acted on under the existing ongoing programmes and those missing out for inclusion at the appropriate time.

Other tasks given to the two consultants include the development of strategies for:

- Advocating for mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction (DRR) into all programmes and activities of NGOs, development partners, local government authorities and the private sector;
- Drawing a plan for promoting a culture of DRR-sensitive planning and actions in the community.
- Designing a comprehensive information databases relevant to DRR in Uganda. ■



## KENYA: National disaster risk reduction policy due for adoption this year

### Mr S.K. Maina

Deputy Secretary,  
Office of the President,  
ISDR National Focal Point,  
Kenya

Kenya's National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy is due for adoption this year. This emerged from a meeting held by the Kenya National Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction in the capital, Nairobi, on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2005.

The meeting reviewed the progress of its activities, and specifically received a report from members who had attended the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR II) in Kobe, Japan, in January 2005.

The Kenyan delegation to the Conference included three officials from the Office of the President, including a permanent secretary, an officer from the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and Kenya's ambassador to Japan.

During the Nairobi meeting, the participants were divided into three groups and given a question each to discuss. The three questions were:

- How can the National Platform members facilitate the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into their respective fields?
- How are the main WCDR II outcomes applicable to Kenya?
- What are the immediate priorities for the National Platform to implement the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy due for adoption this year?

### Advocating enactment of Disaster Management Bill 2005

After the discussions, the group members came up with the following recommendations:

1. The Platform should advocate for the enactment of Disaster Management Bill 2005.



*The Senior Regional Officer of ISDR Africa, Ms Feng Min Kan and Permanent Secretary Mr Mahboub Maalim, Ministry of Special Programmes, Office of the President, Kenya*

2. Institutionalize the Platform and establish a National Disaster Management Agency (NADIMA) and Disaster Management Units in all key Ministries and Departments.
3. Carry out risk and vulnerability assessment/mapping.
4. Mobilize resources for the Platform.
5. Set up sectoral disaster management units and coordinating units, and establish appropriate linkages and collaboration with various key stakeholders. Each organization/sector should designate a focal point to the National Platform and keep other members informed of any changes.
6. Engage in advocacy and awareness creation, education and capacity building.
7. Develop and strengthen sectoral disaster risk reduction policies, legal frameworks and enforcement.
8. Establish disaster management and information database, e.g. early warning systems, resource mapping.
9. Integrate disaster reduction strategies into core sectoral functions.
10. A draft report on the status of DRR to be circulated by the Secretariat to Platform members for comments and refinement with a view to coming up with a national baseline assessment by 30 April 2005. Thereafter, the report shall be disseminated locally, nationally, regionally and internationally.
11. Secretariat to continuously collect information from all members of the Platform and compile annual reports on DRR. ■

# MALI: National platform for disaster reduction launched

## Col. Mamadou Traore

Managing Director,  
Civil Protection,  
Ministry of Internal Security and Civil  
Protection,  
Bamako, Mali

***Mali has established an ISDR national platform. The event took place during a national workshop held in the capital, Bamako, on 26 and 27 May 2005.***

The workshop began with opening remarks by the UN System resident coordinator in Mali, Mr Joseph Bill-Cataria, who stressed on the great importance of the workshop focusing on risk prevention, increased cooperation, partnership at local, national and international levels and priority setting for the 2005–2015 decade.

Mr Anatole Sangare, the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Internal Security and Civil Protection, who also chaired the proceedings, delivered the opening speech. After welcoming and thanking the guests and participants, he set the scene.

## Mali's disaster profile

Mali has, for some 30 years, been affected seriously by the effects of climate change. Drought has settled in gradually, worsened by excessive use of the vegetal cover, which leads to soil degradation.

In 2003, as a result of excessive rainfall, Mali, like several countries of the sub-region, experienced important damage as areas deprived of water for several years received an excessive quantity of water. In addition, crops are threatened every year by locust invasion and various epidemics, as was the case in 2004.

The immediate consequences of these is poor, if not loss of crops (which often results in famine) and loss of livestock. These two consequences disrupt the national economy based mainly on rural



*Officials during the opening ceremony of the workshop establishing the Mali National platform*

activities carried out by 80 per cent of the population. The country also faces other natural hazards shared by the region, such as drought. And extremely hot fumaroles (gas emission) of up to 500 degrees C are observed in the northeastern part of the country.

All the above calamities and disasters have made it necessary to establish adequate response systems and prompted the Ministry of Internal Security and Civil Protection to put in place a ISDR national platform in Mali.

## Proceedings

Mr Anatole Sangare's opening speech was followed by presentations by participants, the adoption of the workshop's agenda, and a review of the situation in the field of disaster risk management by Civil Protection Director-General Col Mamadou Traore.

His review was followed by presentations on the activities of various ministries: those of the Agriculture Ministry (through the Directorate for Locust Control), Health Ministry (through the National Directorate for Health), and Ministry of Environment

and Sanitation (through the National Directorate for Nature Conservation).

Other presentations were also made by the Food Security Commission, the Ministry of Supplies and Transport (through the National Directorate for Meteorology) and the Ministry of Mines (through the National Directorate for Water).

## Current weaknesses

The following weaknesses, in the area of disaster management, emerged from the various presentations and discussions:

- Insufficient data for disaster reduction and management;
- Lack of a centralized database on disaster reduction and management;
- Poor knowledge about risks;
- Poor national policy for disaster reduction and management;
- Poor coordination of disaster management;
- Poor enforcement of existing legislation and regulations at managerial level in the following areas: land, environment and sanitation, health, agriculture,

food security, transport, mines, energy and water, social development, industries ;

- Insufficient information and communication with and sensitization of the public;
- Insufficient human, material, financial, technical and logistical resources.

### Main factors contributing to above weaknesses

- Multitude of risks and lack of risk assessment;
- Poor information gathering, communication and dissemination;
- Lack of framework for consultations;
- Lack of adequate equipment for storing and processing data (computer tools and softwares – Geographical Information System, GIS);
- Lack of training and information ;

- Risk reduction and management not mainstreamed in development planning;
- Lack of strategic plans taking all programmes into account;
- Poor communication ;
- Poor public-spiritedness from the population ;
- Lack of strictness in the enforcement of legislation and regulations;
- Poor involvement of the media;
- Information not disseminated in national languages ;
- Poor level of professionalism in the fields of information and communication.

### Urgent actions required

- Establishing a national platform for disaster reduction;
- Identifying disaster risk zones;
- Developing a strategic plan for

disaster risk reduction and management;

- Building the technical capacity of all actors involved in disaster reduction and management;
- Establishing a monitoring and early warning system;
- Establishing a communication network with specialized institutions in the sub-region and region and at international level;
- Promoting cooperation and partnership to strengthen research in the area of disaster reduction.

### Recommendations

- Legalizing the establishing the ISDR national platform;
- Mobilizing resources to support priority actions in the area of disaster reduction and management;
- Speeding up the approval of the general and sectoral disaster risk reduction plan.■

## CONGO: National platform hampered by lack of legal recognition, resources

### Mr Edmond Makimouha

Director, International Law and Environment, Ministry of Forestry Economy and Environment, ISDR National Focal Point, Brazzaville, Republic of Congo

The Republic of Congo's national platform for disaster management (PFNGC in French) has not been able to operate due to lack of legal recognition and resources.

The Platform was established in August 2004 at the end of a workshop gathering representatives of government departments, NGOS and various associations involved in disaster management and humanitarian issues. The workshop was organized by the Ministry of Forest Economy and Environment with financial and technical support from UN/ISDR Africa.

For permanent contacts between the Platform and UN/ISDR Africa, a UN/ISDR focal point was appointed by the Directorate-General for Environment. This enabled Congo to take part in several international gatherings on disaster reduction and management.

Meanwhile, a legal framework was developed to ensure that the Platform was recognized legally and the role of the government and communities were made effective. The legal framework is based on a draft decree on the creation, duties, composition and functioning of the National Platform under the authority of the Head of Government backed by three vice-chairmen, one being the environment minister. The National Platform was to be endowed with a permanent secretariat and emergency relief committees.

Before submitting the draft decree to the government, a national consultation was

to be held for possible amendments. However, the Platform members could not take any action because of lack of operational resources. This was the case, for instance, when the *ebola* disease resurfaced in the western basin.

Yet, a "Natural Disaster Operations" section has been introduced in the 2005 budget of the Environmental Protection Fund, as provided in Article 88 of the Environmental Protection Act N° 003/91 of 23 April 1991.

It is to be noted that it is only after being institutionalized, recognized and accepted by all that the Platform can develop its annual activity programme in line with the Hyogo Declaration, the Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-2015 and the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction.■



# SENEGAL: ISDR national platform established

**Mr Abdoulaye Ndiaye**  
Director of Civil Protection,  
Ministry of Interior,  
ISDR National Focal Point,  
Senegal

**Senegal has established an ISDR National Platform during a national workshop held in Dakar from 1 to 3 June 2005, organized by the country's Interior Ministry (through its Directorate for Civil Protection) with support from the UN System in Senegal and UN/ISDR Africa.**

Natural disasters such as floods, droughts and other disasters experienced by Senegal often have affected people, their property and the environment seriously, wiping out development efforts. To help reduce these negative effects, the Senegalese authorities have decided to establish a national platform for disaster reduction. This conforms fully to the conclusions and recommendations of the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Japan, in January 2005.

The national workshop to establish the national platform gathered 35 participants from various government ministries, the civil society, the media and the UN System in Senegal.

## Mainstreaming DRR in sustainable development

The opening ceremony was presided over by the chief of the Interior Minister's Office, Mr Ndari Toure. In his opening speech, Mr Toure reminded the participants that many sectoral disaster reduction programmes had been adopted, such as the charter signed by the Employers' Federation on occupational injury prevention and management, and the protocol agreement on drowning accident prevention signed with the Mayors' Association.

However, he said, shortcomings were observed when it comes to mainstreaming disaster risks in sustainable development



*Mr. Ndari Touré, Chief of the office of the Minister of Interior and Mr. A. Ndiaye, Director of Civil Protection, Senegal*

and poverty reduction strategies and policies.

He also said developing countries often found it difficult to mobilize the technical and financial resources necessary for implementing disaster risk reduction programmes and intervention plans for emergency humanitarian situations.

## Weaknesses

At the end of group discussions, the participants noted a number of weaknesses and inadequacies in the field of disaster management in Senegal, especially the following:

- Lack of consultations between government departments involved in disaster reduction and management;
- Difficulties in risk identification and vulnerability zone mapping;
- Lack of legal framework defining the area and type of intervention for each structure;
- Disaster management coordination problems observed within the state and its various components;
- Lack of adequate community-level structures for disaster reduction;
- Lack of vision on prevention issues from decision makers (poor awareness, prioritization problems, poor ownership of risk reduction policy);
- Lack of reliable statistics on risk zones and the number and type of disaster experienced by Senegal to date;
- Lack of rapid communication system in case of a major disaster, which often leads to difficulties in conveying information from disaster zones to sites of intervention;
- Serious lack of awareness on the usefulness of meteorological information to disaster and accident prevention;
- Lack of public awareness through the media;
- Lack of education on prevention (for instance the Environmental Training and Information Programme);
- Lack of early warning system and risk zone monitoring;
- Poor quality of disaster or accident emergency relief, especially the medical aspect of relief for instance in road accidents;
- Difficult access to some human settlements in case of accident due to narrowness of streets: this is the case for traditional villages in Dakar

(Yarakh, Hann, Ouakam, Ngor and Yoff) ;

- Lack of resources at central government, decentralized local government and population levels to deal with some types of disaster. This problem is worsened by lack of synergy and consultations between structures and organs involved in field operations;
- Lack of effective quality control on old and new buildings and on those under construction;
- Uncontrolled use (as in Dakar) of major river beds for human settlement and market gardening (for instance the niayes);
- Poor control of sudden rise in river levels, as is the case in Saint-Louis, Podor, Matam and Bakel and along the Senegal River.
- Deforestation in some parts of watersheds, especially upstream in high-rainfall zones;
- Lack of adequate close monitoring of waterways' behaviours;
- Poor handling of various types of disaster (bush fire, river water flooding, sea protrusion, etc.);
- Non enforcement of legislation and regulations (town planning, sanitation and environmental codes, etc.).

## Main factors contributing to above weaknesses

The group noted a number of factors that worsen the situation as far as disaster reduction and management is concerned, including the following:

### *At central government and government organ levels*

- Insufficient or absolute lack of information and training on prevention issues for decision makers, the private sector and even the civil society;
- Lack of legal documents adapted to prevention issues (for instance on transport of harmful substances in big cities like Dakar);
- Lack of means for rapid intervention during disasters (relief operation helicopters for instance) ;



*Members of national platform and diplomatic corps during the opening ceremony*

- Health structures' poor accommodation capacity for disaster victims;
- Unsuitable means of intervention in case, for instance, of a flood (for instance water pumping is effected only when a flood occurs) ;
- Poor definition and organization of intervention structures' scopes of activities;
- No respect for security zones located between industrial areas and housing development programmes.

### *At decentralized local government and population levels*

- Problems of information on, public awareness of and education on the notion of prevention;
- Ignorance of or lack of knowledge about the notion of risk as a result of deep-rooted belief/myth-founded cultural assumptions.
- Lack of environmental impact assessment studies in urban projects in general (real estate, public works, housing, etc.)
- No respect for land use plans (town planning and land use plans) ;
- Uncontrolled settlement on some zones (former lakes, waterways, niayes, coastal dunes, etc.).

## Urgent actions required

In the light of the above observations,

the workshop participants recommended the following urgent actions for immediate or short/medium-term implementation:

1. First of all educating, sensitizing and informing all components of the society at large (ranging from decision makers to the common man);
2. Carrying out immediately an inventory of risk zones all over the country and specify the nature of the risk prevailing in each zone;
3. Carrying out an exhaustive and detailed mapping of risk zones;
4. Activating advocacy directed at decision makers (Office of the President of the Republic, Government, National Assembly, Council of the Republic and for Economic and Social Affairs, elected local leaders, etc.);
5. Reviewing the legal framework with the addition of some specific points that may help promote a good disaster risk reduction policy;
6. Establishing a disaster warning and reduction system;
7. Displacing and relocating all people settled in risk zones;
8. Constructing structures adapted to flood and sea protrusion prevention;
9. Using efficiently all means offered by the new information and communication technology (ITC);

10. Establishing a monitoring mechanism for meteorological and rainfall data for clear observation of waterways' behaviours;
11. Carrying out a comprehensive review of the various actions and types of intervention carried out against disasters already experienced by Senegal;
12. Approving the plan for reorganizing the National Fire Brigade (GNSP in French) ;
13. Verifying risk-facing enterprises' internal organization plans;
14. Establishing a comprehensive information and communication

programme for sensitizing and educating Senegalese people on risk prevention and management, with the help of television and radio stations and the media at large, and also through workshops, forums and seminars. ■

## NIGER: Why the country seeks to establish an ISDR national platform

**Mrs Mariama Ousseini,**  
Programme Officer,  
Monitoring Unit,  
Coordination of the Early Warning System,  
Prime Minister's Office,  
Niamey, Niger

Niger is a huge (1,267,000 sq. km.), landlocked, Sahelian West African country with the nearest port at some 1,000 km from its capital, Niamey. Most parts of the territory (three-quarter) are a desert, including the Tenere Desert, one of the world's harshest deserts.

As Niger is located in one of the warmest areas of the globe, its climate is generally arid. Two types of climate prevail in the country: a desert type of climate in most of the territory, and a tropical one with a single rainy season in the rest of the country. The country's rainfall is characterized by strong variations both in time and space.

### A large number of recurrent disasters

Niger faces a large number of recurrent natural or man-made disasters such as drought, floods, fires, epidemics, social conflicts and especially attacks by crop predators during crop harvesting periods.

Out of deep concern over the frequency and seriousness of its crises, Niger, like many other African countries, committed itself to resolutely develop and build its capacity to handle emergency situations through prevention and institutional



*Mrs Mariama Ousseini, Monitoring Unit,  
Coordination of the Early Warning System,  
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capacity building, especially in its early warning system.

### Food crises

The government has taken relevant measures by establishing disaster reduction and management mechanisms through an Early Warning System Coordination Unit (CC/SAP in French) and a Food Crisis Coordination Unit (CCA in French).

The early warning system was established, in the Prime Minister's Office, on 23 August 1989. It was modified on 31 May 1995 with the addition of a response component to

various disasters (disaster management). The system's objective is to contribute to preventing food and nutrition crises.

Accordingly, it monitors and provides leadership to all early warning and disaster management activities so as to avoid or reduce disaster risks and/or effects in the food, socio-economic, health and nutrition areas.

With support from the international community, the government has, since December 1998, striven to apply technical and institutional solutions that enable better management of food crises - without harming households' response capability - and sustained improvement of food security.

### A national mechanism limited to food crisis

The Niger government and its main donors therefore established a national food crisis prevention and management mechanism whose pillars are:

- A common body: the Joint Commission for State-Donors Consultations (CMC in French) which is the decision-making and coordination structure of the entire mechanism;
- A common wealth: the National Reserve Stock (SNR in French) which can be mobilized when a serious food crisis occurs. The stock is composed of:



1. A physical stock: the National Security Stock (SNS in French);
2. A financial stock: the Food Security Fund (FSA in French);
3. An intervention fund for crisis mitigation actions in case of localized crises. The fund is composed of a Donors' Common Fund (FCD in French) and a Bilaterally Managed Food Aid Counterpart Fund.

Also, a National Emergency Plan (PNU in French) was developed in the framework of a revamped National Policy for Food Crisis Prevention and Management and increased consultations between Niger and its major donors.

Meanwhile, brainstorming is under way for the development of a National Emergency Intervention Plan (in the area of food crisis). The emergency plan has become an urgent necessity for Niger because:

- Shortcomings have been observed in the management of the various food crises;
- It is necessary to establish an adequate framework for the implementation of a National Strategy for Food Crisis Prevention and Management;
- There is need for better coordination of interventions by redefining the various players' roles.

The main objective of the emergency plan is to enable adequate, speedy and need-oriented decision making by:

- Identifying the various types of crisis and their respective risks;
- Identifying the necessary prevention measures;
- Identifying crisis trigger points;
- Mobilizing the most important tools depending on the nature of the crisis and the scale of intervention;
- Defining organizational measures and procedures to be followed in case of food crisis;
- Improving the targeting of beneficiaries.

It is clear that the current mechanism is limited strictly to food crisis.

### **Towards a mechanism extended to all types of disaster**

Niger has embarked on the search for ways and means suitable for natural disaster reduction and management which, nowadays, have become an unbearable burden for mankind. In this connection, the country is planning to establish a national platform coordinating disaster risk reduction and disaster management activities.

As similar national platforms are already available in most African countries, such an initiative will help to harmonize further intervention strategies in the West Africa sub-region.

Indeed, experience and analysis have shown that whatever measures are taken, a national disaster reduction and management strategy alone is not enough to mitigate disaster impact on most affected people.

### **Plans and recommendations for the proposed national platform**

A major task awaiting the proposed Niger national platform is the development of the above-mentioned Emergency Intervention Plan covering any types of disaster that may occur in the country.

The Plan's objectives are similar to those of the Food Crisis Plan but they are extended to all types of disaster.

The proposed basic principles underlying the Plan are:

- Local, national and sub-regional levels are expected to be in full charge gradually, depending on the seriousness of the disaster;
- Participatory and consultative approach which necessitates the involvement of field actors and beneficiaries;
- Holistic approach to food security in order to assess risk for the deterioration of food situations;
- Open-ended approach that leaves room for future adjustments and improvements prompted by developments in the information mechanism and economic context;
- Adoption of the Plan by all players involved in disaster management;
- Legal recognition of the Plan at the country's national, regional and sub-regional levels.

The main recommendation is that the information system and programme monitoring and evaluation should be strengthened. ■



*Malnourished children in Niger (Photo: Eden Foundation)*

# African journalists pledge to help promote culture of prevention

UN/ISDR Africa  
Nairobi, Kenya

***Disasters are not mere events striking at a particular time but the result of various processes. Journalists therefore should shift from an “event” to a “process” approach, from “sensational” to “contextual” disaster reporting. The following is a report on a disaster reduction workshop for selected African journalists.***

“We recognize the ongoing global efforts made towards disaster risk reduction. We believe the initiative is crucial for sustainable development. ... We promise to work hand in glove with the UN/ISDR Secretariat and African Governments to achieve the ultimate goals. We call upon all journalists worldwide to join this effort...”

The above statement was made by African journalists a few weeks before the January 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction. Called “Nairobi Statement on Awareness of Disaster Risk Reduction”, it was issued at the end of a “Workshop on Media & Disaster Risk Reduction for East & Southern African Journalists” held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 14 to 17 December 2004.

Organized jointly by InWent (Capacity Building International, Germany) and UN/ISDR Africa, the four-day workshop was attended by 20 participants, including state and private media environmental reporters, development journalists, news editors, news agency reporters and information officers. Also attending was a media owner. The participants were from the following eight English-speaking countries in eastern and southern Africa: Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Lesotho and Mozambique.

The workshop aimed to sensitize the journalists on the fact that they can play



Participants at the workshop

an essential role in promoting a shift from a culture of reaction to disasters to a culture of disaster prevention in Africa - through improved disaster reporting.

## Background & Context

There is growing interest for disaster reduction in Africa. At national level, National Platforms for Disaster Reduction have been established in a number of African countries, and many more of these were to be established in 2005. In some countries, disaster management legislation has been voted and disaster management bodies restructured towards more focus on disaster reduction. At continental level, major steps have been taken over the last two years under the leading role of the AU, the NEPAD Secretariat and the African Development Bank (AfDB), with support from UN/ISDR Africa.

In fact, an Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Reduction, developed by African experts, was adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on Environment in June 2004, and submitted to the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2004. Receiving the Strategy positively, the African leaders

called for the development of the related Africa Plan of Action.

Such major developments, however, would not be effective without public awareness. As the media can play an essential role in raising general public awareness, especially in bridging the gap between information available and information received, African journalists had to be sensitized. Hence, the idea of organizing a disaster reduction workshop for journalists as a first step to address the issue. The December 2004 “Workshop on Media & Disaster Reduction for East and Southern African Journalists” was a starting point in this process.

## Proceedings

The four-day proceedings were facilitated by two facilitators: Mr R. Alain Valency (leading facilitator), international journalist and editor of the English and French versions of UN/ISDR Africa’s “Disaster Reduction in Africa” newsletter/magazine; and Mr Ib Knutsen, journalist and information officer with UN/ISDR Africa.

**Day 1** aimed to enable the journalists to understand what disaster reduction was,

that disaster reduction was a cross-cutting, multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary activity, and that, to be effective, it had to be supplemented by awareness from both policy/decision makers and the general public.

To that end, presentations were made respectively by UN/ISDR Africa Senior Regional Outreach Officer Ms Feng Min Kan, UNDP Regional Adviser for Disaster Reduction in Africa Mr Kenneth Westgate, Climatologist Mr Zachary Atheru of the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC), and InWent Mozambique Programme Coordinator Mr Torsten Wegner.

**Day 2** began with a presentation on “Governance & Disaster Reduction” by Mr Ron Cadribo, a development consultant on governance and public administration. Next was a presentation entitled “Media & Disaster Reduction – Redefining Disaster Reporting” by Mr R. Alain Valency, international journalist and editor of the English and French versions of the UN/ISDR Africa newsletter/magazine.

Mr Valency’s presentation provided a new approach to disaster reporting. He said disasters were not merely events striking at a particular time but the result of various processes involving hazards, vulnerability, governance, etc. Therefore, he said, journalists should shift from an “event” to a “process” approach. The “process” approach, he said, enabled a shift from “sensational” journalism to more responsible “contextual” journalism that allows to ask/explain why disasters occur and ask/explain how their impacts could be avoided or at least reduced. Mr Valency explained, with the support of various examples, that the “process” approach offered unlimited opportunities for various stories: political/governance, social, economic, environmental, technical, scientific and also human-interest stories.

Mr Valency’s presentation was followed by a lively debate on journalists’

coverage priorities and conflicting interests with disaster managers in information delivery. The debate was followed by group discussions on specific topics and practical journalistic activities.

**Day 3** began with a presentation entitled “A Proposal for a Network of Disaster Reduction Aware Journalists in Africa” by Mr R. Alain Valency. He said such a structure was needed to consolidate the gains from the workshop. To this end, he said, the proposed network should help with journalistic and educational material. Mr Valency said for any institution to be sustainable, it had to seek to promote and protect value(s) but also respond to practical needs.

Mr Valency’s presentation was followed by group discussions. The following name was selected for the network: “Journalists in Africa for Disaster Risk Reduction Network” (JADRR Net). The draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Network were finalized by a drafting committee to be submitted to plenary discussions for approval the following day. The drafting committee also drafted a 2005 Programme of Action for the Network and a Statement to be issued by the Network.

**Day 4**, the last day, began with a plenary session to approve the Network’s TOR, Programme of Action and Statement. The plenary discussions began with the final draft of the TOR. After further discussions, the TOR, 2005 Programme of Action and Statement were adopted.

Next on the agenda was the drafting of flyer slogans and messages capturing the essence of the link between disaster reduction and sustainable development.

The workshop ended with a speech by one of the participants, journalist Henry Baguma of Uganda, final remarks by Mr Torsten Wegner of InWent Mozambique, and closing remarks by UN/ISDR Africa’s Ms Feng Min Kan who hailed the outcomes of the workshop.

## Outcomes

The journalists became aware of the need for disaster risk reduction and its importance for sustainable development.

It emerged from the flyer slogans and messages they had drafted on the last day that they had reached an “advanced” awareness of the topic. In fact, a number of them started promoting awareness of disaster reduction by dispatching news reports about the workshop to their respective media houses on Day 2.

- The journalists understood clearly the desired shift from an “event” to a “process” approach to disaster reporting. For the sake of continuity and further learning, they established a network known as “Journalists in Africa for Disaster Risk Reduction Network”, JADRR Net, endowed with its own Terms of Reference and a 2005 Programme of Action.
- The journalists expressed the commitment to spread their awareness to members of the media community, decision makers and the general public, as mentioned in their network’s Terms of Reference<sup>1</sup>, 2005 Programme of Action and formal statement (*see first paragraph of present article*).
- The journalists went as far as expressing their commitment openly and publicly in a formal statement to be shown to the global disaster management community at the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Japan in January 2005. ■

<sup>1</sup> JADRR Net’s vision/mission statement : The Network shall be a strong and independent voice in promoting awareness of Disaster Risk Reduction. This will be done through advocacy and news coverage on the importance of reducing vulnerability in order to achieve sustainable development in Africa.



# African national platforms hold first consultative meeting

## UN/ISDR Africa

Nairobi, Kenya

The “*First Consultative Meeting on National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction in Africa*” was held on 21-23 April 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting attracted a total of 27 participants representing seven of the 11 existing national platforms (Comoros, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Senegal and Uganda), four countries (Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Seychelles Island) intending to establish national platforms in the near future.

Among the 27 participants were also two journalists from Zambia and Uganda (both two are members of the African Journalists for Disaster Risk Reduction Network), the regional representative for UNDP’s Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP-BCPR), the officer in charge of national platforms at UN/ISDR Geneva, and the head and staff members of UN/ISDR Africa.

## National platforms: background information

Since its creation in October 2002, UN/ISDR Africa has carried out its activities on the basis of its working principles through outreaching, networking, coordinating and collaborating with major stakeholders to advance the disaster risk reduction process in Africa. One of UN/ISDR Africa’s major areas of work is establishing formal working relations with National Governments, in order to promote ownership of disaster reduction and its mainstreaming into development planning and programmes.

The establishment of national platforms in the region represents a means of generating such ownership at the national level. To date, UN/ISDR Africa has responded to 11 National Government



*Participants at the First Consultative Meeting on National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction in Africa (national focal points, consultants and media representatives)*

requests for support in the establishment of national platforms.

## Aim of the consultative meeting

The consultative meeting aimed at addressing the following specific objectives:

- Providing a forum for focal points of national platforms in Africa to share their successes and lessons learnt in coordinating national platforms for disaster risk reduction;
- Reviewing the effectiveness and relevance of the existing guidelines for the establishment of national platforms;
- Brainstorming on ways to advance disaster risk reduction at national level;
- Discussing possible ways to enhance networking among national platform focal points in Africa;
- Reviewing the relevance of UN/ISDR

publications for linking disaster risk reduction with sustainable development; and

- Discussing the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and the Africa Plan of Action for DRR.

## Outcomes

The consultative meeting resulted in a series of recommendations (see box below) for national platforms, UNDP-BCPR and UN/ISDR Africa.

It also succeeded in achieving the following outputs: improved networking among national platforms, greater understanding of national platforms’ experiences and needs, ideas on how to advance disaster risk reduction at the national level, and concerted recommendations for the strengthening of national platforms in addition to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework

for Action (HFA) and the Africa Regional Strategy and the Africa Plan of Action.

### Regarding the implementation of the HFA, Africa Regional Strategy and Africa Plan of Action, the following emerged from meeting

#### *Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)*

The participants agreed that African countries did not present a common position at the January 2005 Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR II) held in Kobe, Japan. This could have been due to the absence of leadership from regional organizations during the Conference. This should not be seen as a limiting factor for Africa's participation in international activities; rather it can be used as an opportunity to approach other regional actors the national platforms are in a position to influence.

The primary responsibility to lobby heads of state lies with national platforms. However, to further support national platforms' advocacy efforts, it was proposed that UN/ISDR participates in the upcoming AU summit by presenting results of the WCDR, reminding African heads of state of what they pledged in Kobe and what needs to be done for the implementation of the HFA. The next G-8 summit could prove a similar opportunity to advocate to African heads of state so they can ensure an appropriate follow-up.

While African countries may feel more ownership towards the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction than towards the HFA, they need to speak in the language of donor countries when seeking their support (donor countries are more familiar with HFA).

#### *Africa Regional Strategy for DRR & Africa Plan of Action for DRR*

There was common consensus that throughout Africa there is inadequate high-level political commitment to disaster risk reduction, and that there was a need for identification of entry points for **national advocacy and influencing political leadership**. For example, advocacy efforts specifically targeted at the ministries of finance and planning can ensure that disaster reduction is raised on political and legislative agendas, which in

turn will be reflected in the development of national policies and strategies. Another means of entry can be via a similar process to that of poverty reduction, which recently obtained commitment from high-level decision-makers who are now proactively addressing the issue. High-level initiatives also offer opportunities for high level influence, such as the Commission for Africa, the Commonwealth and the G-8.

UN/ISDR Africa can further complement and support national advocacy efforts by lobbying high level politicians at the national level, simultaneously using their position in the UN system to advocate to UN country offices.

A bottom-up approach to disaster reduction advocacy can further complement existing national efforts. Generating public awareness among a broad audience can in turn pressure decision-makers into developing disaster reduction policies and strategies. Similarly, awareness can be increased in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, when media and public attention is highest.

Other awareness-raising opportunities include the promotion of African UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction laureates. For example in 2003, the Award was presented to Mrs Esther Tadzong of Cameroon.

The question of whether disaster risk reduction could include **conflict prevention** was raised among participants, considering the African context where it can be said that conflict is a disaster. Conflict can sometimes be triggered by a disaster; disasters can sometimes represent a means of resolving conflicts - therefore reducing risk and vulnerability can also be applied to conflicts.

In the case of the UN system, the UN General Assembly clearly divides mandates between UN/ISDR, UNDP and OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), with OCHA being responsible for stepping in post-conflict. Disasters affect six to seven times more people than conflicts.

Means of **fund mobilisation** were also discussed, with national platforms being

encouraged to be prepared to invite financial support for specific projects and initiatives through the submission of proposals to UN and donor organizations. National platforms can mobilise funds by clearly communicating disaster reduction initiatives and needs to donors who have indicated their interests in supporting such projects. National platforms should note that those funds and resources that are available for disaster reduction traditionally come from the humanitarian sector, which are not necessarily the same available for reconstruction and development.

**Common Country Assessment/UN Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF)** are tools that represent a concrete opportunity to advocate DRR by its inclusion in UN country team development programmes and planning.

The UNDAF is the common strategic framework for the operational activities of the UN system at the country level. It provides a collective, coherent and integrated UN system response to national priorities and needs, including PRSPs and equivalent national strategies, within the framework of the MDGs and the commitments, goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration and international conferences, summits, conventions and human rights instruments of the UN system. The UNDAF emerges from the analyses of the CCA and is the next step in the preparation of UN system country programmes and projects to cooperation.

In support of disaster reduction at the national level, UN/ISDR is currently working with UNDP to promote the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in the CCA/UNDAF process. National platforms should make themselves familiar with CCA/UNDAF in order to maximise the opportunity to generate support for their disaster reduction efforts.

Different African countries have different experiences with CCA/UNDAF, according to the extent to which UN country teams are sensitised to disaster risk reduction and its role in development. UNDP/BCPR, UN/ISDR Africa and national platforms can influence this process through the advocacy activities described above. ■

# First Consultative Meeting on National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction in Africa

## Recommendations

### Preamble

We, the participants of the First African Consultative Meeting of National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), taking into consideration key international commitments in DRR and sustainable development as expressed through the Millennium Development Goals, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, African Union (AU)/New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) commitments reflected in the Africa Strategy for DRR and its Programme of Action; as well as the recently-adopted Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015,

Recommend the following urgent actions within the context of the UN/ISDR Guiding Principles for National Platforms.

### Part One - By National Platforms

1. Identify entry points for influencing political leadership such as target legislators (MPs) and sensitize them through workshops and similar mechanisms. *Time frame: by October 2005*
2. Develop projects and proposals for incorporating DRR into development programmes to attract donor support. *Time frame: June 2006*
3. Present a coordinated plan to influence high-level international initiatives, such as through African Observers at the G-8 Summit, Commission for Africa, Commonwealth and Agence de la Francophonie. *Time frame: October 2006*
4. Link DRR to key thematic issues such as poverty reduction and governance that address the MDGs at local, national and regional levels of implementation through methods recommended in the Guidelines for Integrating Disaster Risk Assessment into Development.
5. Liaise with UN/ISDR and UNDP-BCPR in developing tools to communicate country needs to donors, including the World Bank and other international financial institutions.
6. Design practical ways of consistently enhancing public awareness on DRR, including those opportunities when media and public attention are high, such as the immediate aftermath of a disaster.
7. Assist fellow countries without a DRR focal point or a national platform to establish similar mechanisms.
8. Consider principles of Humanitarian Law in developing DRR documents and guidelines.
9. Actively participate in the processes of Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).
10. Ensure that national DRR activities are gender-sensitive and inclusive of vulnerable groups including children.

### Part Two - By UN/ISDR Africa and UNDP-BCPR

#### A. Networking

11. Institutionalize twice-yearly consultative meetings for national platforms, with the second consultation to be held by October 2005.
12. Establish a dedicated *ListServe* linked to the UN/ISDR and UNDP-BCPR web sites.
13. Develop an African capacity sourcebook on DRR and disaster management, along the lines of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) Resource Book (developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD), which can be serialized in future issues of *Disaster Reduction in Africa – ISDR Informs* and widely circulated.

#### B. Promotion of political commitment

14. UN/ISDR Director (Geneva), working through the AU Commission, to directly lobby and advocate DRR to political leaders and regional economic commissions, in collaboration with existing national platforms and related disaster management institutions/focal points in those countries that do not have national platforms.
15. Support national advocacy efforts by lobbying political leaders to place DRR on the agenda of the AU Summit, including through UN/ISDR making a presentation linking DRR with food security and sustainable development themes at AU Summit.
16. Advocate the links between DRR, the environment and other sectors at national, sub-regional and regional levels in close collaboration with UNEP.
17. Support national platforms to transform the HFA, the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR and its Programme of Action into practical projects at national and local levels.

#### C. Resource Mobilisation

18. In recognition of those pledges made by donor countries at the January 2005 Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDDR II) to support DRR in Africa, assist national platforms to develop programmes of action and budget plans based on their national strategies and the Africa Regional Strategy, and market them to potential funding sources. *Time frame: by June 2006*
19. Bring together potential donors and national platforms in a forum, whereby national platforms present their programmes of action. *Time frame: September 2006*

#### D. Public awareness

20. Support the mainstreaming of DRR and disaster management into educational curricula at all levels, through the production and dissemination of guidelines educational material for primary, secondary, tertiary and adult education.
21. Support the active use of media to publicize DRR and disaster management both at times of crisis and as a matter of routine.

#### E. Capacity building and training

22. Support national platforms to design a regional capacity-building and training programme based on the African DRR sourcebook described above in paragraph 3 and coordinate funding from different donors in support of this.



# Africa Advisory Group on Disaster Risk Reduction established

UN/ISDR Africa  
Nairobi, Kenya

A newly-established structure known as “Africa Advisory Group on Disaster Risk Reduction” held its first meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, on 10 and 11 June 2005 with the active participation of an AU senior official, Government representatives from Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda and Madagascar, and experts from Ghana and South Africa.

The Africa Advisory Group aims to facilitate the building of African nations’ and communities’ resilience to disasters under the guidance of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).



Members of the Africa Advisory Group on Disaster Risk Reduction

## Why an Africa Advisory Group on DRR?

The African Advisory Group is a body convened by UN/ISDR Africa. The purpose of the Group is to advise and support national platforms and governments, and sub-regional and regional authorities to be effective in implementing and promoting DRR in Africa.

This will include integrating DRR into the numerous poverty reduction and sustainable development initiatives in Africa aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In this regard, the AAG takes cognisance of conflicts in the region, their negative environmental impacts and the consequential vulnerability of displaced people to disasters.

## AAG's goal

The goal of the AAG is to advise and facilitate the building and growth of resilient nations and communities in Africa through DRR activities.

## AAG's specific objectives

1. To advise and support national governments, sub-regional and regional bodies and relevant UN agencies to implement the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Africa Plan of Action for DRR in the context of the January 2005 Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) for realizing the MDGs in Africa.
2. To advise and provide technical support for mobilizing political commitment and resources for DRR from national, sub-regional and regional authorities (e.g. ECOWAS, AU/NEPAD) in the context of regional and international programmes and fora.
3. To support the establishment of linkages between national governments, sub-regional and regional authorities in order to promote the integration and mainstreaming of DRR programmes

into policies and strategies for poverty reduction, good governance, sustainable development, gender mainstreaming and education *inter alia*.

## Terms of reference

### Objective 1

- To advise and support national governments, sub-regional, regional bodies and relevant UN agencies to implement the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR and the Africa Plan of Action for DRR in the context of the January 2005 Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) for realizing the MDGs in Africa.
- To promote and support national platforms (NPs) and development partners to implement the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR and the Africa Plan of Action for DRR, including focus on gender specific

needs and concerns.

- To support NPs and development partners to recognize and address the socio-psychological needs of disaster-affected communities in implementing DRR, especially during response, recovery and rehabilitation, and where the disasters are exacerbated by conflict or the movement of refugees.
- To support and promote the profile of African expertise in DRR and related skills, and to facilitate the active and focused participation of this expertise in national, sub regional, regional and international programmes and fora.
- To ensure that African knowledge contributes to the identification of DRR priorities and that African needs are addressed in international and regional programmes through the recognition and involvement of African expertise.
- To support the further development of African capacity when international programmes are implemented by international agencies in Africa or those programmes whose outputs would be applied in Africa.

### Objective 2

- To advise and provide technical support for mobilizing political commitment from regional and sub-regional authorities (e.g. ECOWAS, AU/NEPAD) in the context of international programmes and fora.
- To facilitate the development of a high-level political platform by supporting ministers and heads of states of those countries having active NPs in the preparation of statements to appropriate bodies.
- To promote the involvement of African experts to support NPs, sub-regional bodies and AU/NEPAD interaction with international development partners for the integration of African DRR priorities and expertise into their programmes.
- To provide advice to NPs to influence national policy direction through

mainstreaming of DRR into development policies and programmes such as PRSPs (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers) and UN's CCA (Common Country Assessment) and UNDAF (UN Development Assistance Framework) processes.

- To provide advice and technical support to NPs, sub-regional and regional bodies on geohazards in Africa and ways and means to measure, monitor and mitigate the impact of disasters arising from them with a view to increasing the positive role that science and information and communication technology (ICT) can play in DRR.

### Objective 3

- To support linkages between national governments, sub-regional and regional authorities in order to promote the integration of DRR programmes into the development strategies of the different countries.
- To support NPs to report on progress and monitoring of DRR using the relevant instruments and processes such as the MDGs, PRSPs, CCD and the UNFCCC (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change).
- To identify existing relevant

international programmes and to provide advice on how these programmes can be used to support DRR activities in Africa.

- To provide assistance to NPs to develop programmes of action and budgets for DRR based on the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR and Africa Plan of Action for DRR, and to support the marketing of these programmes to potential donors and UN agencies, e.g. by using the Consolidated Appeal (CAP) and the Flash Appeal Strategies (UNOCHA – UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs).

Mechanism of operation for the AAG  
This has yet to be decided and agreed upon between members of the AAG, the UN/ISDR and other players.

### Membership

The Group comprises persons demonstrating personal commitment to and a particular knowledge of disaster risk reduction (DRR) as well as experience in establishing NPs in Africa. Members, who are conversant with development challenges as they relate to disasters in the different sub-regions of Africa, are supported by African experts in the field of DRR. ■



*Impacts of tsunami in the coast of Somalia*

**Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki addressed the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN- HABITAT Governing Council on 4 April 2005. His address was divided in two parts. The second part was on the “urbanization of poverty”. The first part was on the need to reduce disaster impact.**

### **Speech by Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki 20th Session of the Governing Council of UN Habitat, UN Complex, Nairobi, Kenya 4 April 2005**

(Source: Kenyan Government website)

“

Mr President, Distinguished  
Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address the 20th Session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT. I welcome all delegates to Kenya and hope that you will have a pleasant stay in our beautiful country.

About a month ago, a number of us present today participated in the 23rd Session of the Governing Council of UNEP, a sister Programme to UN-HABITAT. My Country feels privileged to host the two United Nations Programmes.

As we assemble to share best practices and address the challenges to achieving adequate shelter and sustainable human settlements, we also remember calamities that have reduced the impact of our initiatives.

We all share fresh memories of the mega earthquake of 26th December 2004 which generated massive tsunamis that hit islands in the Far East and most of the Indian Ocean coastline. The catastrophe caused widespread devastation to life and human settlements in 12 countries, including Kenya.

Well over 150,000 people lost their lives and many more were rendered homeless. In all, the livelihoods of close to 5 million people were disrupted by this calamity. I once again extend our heartfelt condolences to the United Nations fraternity in general and to the affected countries and families in particular.

Mr President,

We live in a world in which conflicts and disasters continue to cause immense



*H.E. the President of the Republic of Kenya, Mr Mwai Kibaki*

suffering including loss of life, and extensive damage to infrastructure, property and the environment. Whenever these calamities occur, they take us many years back in our efforts to provide sustainable human settlements.

The most common natural disasters include extreme weather conditions which cause droughts, fires, floods and landslides. Developing countries experience the greatest devastation from these disasters because of the low level of preparedness as well as inadequate capacity to respond rapidly and effectively.

With regard to human-made disasters, the serious challenge has been civil conflicts that result in large populations of internally displaced persons and refugees. Civil conflicts increase demand for illicit small arms that propel insecurity within

and beyond the borders of the states involved.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Africa, more than any other continent has suffered from the adverse impacts of conflicts and other calamities such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic that currently threatens to reverse previous gains in the health and economic sectors. This is most disturbing. Nevertheless, I am certain that conflicts and disasters can be turned into windows of opportunity for stepping up the momentum of development.

However, because of the high costs involved in the transition from relief to development following a conflict or disaster, there is need for involvement of governments in close partnership with the private sector, Non-Governmental Organizations, Community-Based



Organizations and the international community.

Moreover, we need to enhance disaster preparedness at the community level through adequate funding. I am gratified to note that one of the special themes during this Session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT will focus on post-conflict and disaster mitigation. I hope that the outcome of the deliberations will contribute significantly towards reducing the impacts of disasters, particularly in developing countries.

Mr President,

The notion of "global village" poses a major challenge, particularly for developing countries. Most developing countries, including Kenya, are urbanizing rapidly and are witnessing extensive movement of people to towns and cities. The implication is that the majority of the world's population will be living in the urban areas by the year 2020.

The rural-urban movement exceeds the capacity of urban managers to provide housing, infrastructure, services and job opportunities. This situation is resulting into what has become known as the urbanization of poverty.

For example, the Welfare Monitoring Survey in Kenya showed that Kisumu recorded the highest prevalence of absolute poverty of 63 per cent, followed by Nairobi with 50 per cent, Nakuru recorded 41 per cent, while Mombasa had 38 per cent. This situation calls for concerted efforts involving poverty reduction, facilitating access to water and sanitation, upgrading of slums and regularizing land tenure.

However, since urbanization is a reality that is unstoppable and irreversible, we also need to adopt proactive policies and programmes including good governance and capacity building of the managers so as to avert the growth of slums and informal settlements.

Reducing by half the number of people without access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation by 2015 and improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 is a daunting challenge for us in developing countries. We recognize that each country has an obligation to raise the resources required in meeting these targets. However, to complement domestic public and private sources, it is imperative that the development partners make efforts to meet their commitment of 0.7 per cent of their GNPs as official development assistance.

In addition, the international community should implement debt relief, debt swaps and debt cancellation, where appropriate, as a means of mobilizing resources towards accelerating realization of the Millennium Development Goals on water, sanitation and human settlements.

Mr President,

Slum areas are one of the main arenas where all the Millennium Development Goals can be addressed. In recognition of this, my Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 15th January 2003 with UN-HABITAT to systematically upgrade slums countrywide under the Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme.

Upgrading of slum areas has been given high priority and will be undertaken with minimal displacement of slum dwellers to cater for proper planning and provision of necessary infrastructure and services. I formally launched the implementation phase of the Programme on the occasion of the global observance of World Habitat Day on 4 October 2004 at the decanting site adjacent to the sprawling Kibera slums in Nairobi.

My Government has also established the Slum Upgrading and Low-Cost Housing and Infrastructure Fund from which slum-upgrading activities will be financed. On this note, I call on our development

partners, both locally and internationally to contribute to the Fund to enable us improve the lives of slum dwellers.

At the global level, I note with appreciation the efforts being made by the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT towards strengthening the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, and specifically in establishing the Slum Upgrading Facility.

I therefore urge the donor community and countries in a position to do so, to contribute to the Facility to enable UN-HABITAT support national slum upgrading activities. I hope that UN-HABITAT will work closely with organizations both within and outside the United Nations System, particularly with the World Bank and other regional banks, in support of national slum upgrading programmes.

As I conclude my remarks, let me reiterate that in order to meet the targets, goals and timetables set by the Millennium Summit and the World Summit for Social Development, we require greater commitment on the part of all those concerned, if the agreed targets are to be met. I therefore wish you fruitful deliberations as you share experiences in the field of human settlements.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to mention that Kenya, as a tourist destination in this part of the world, is endowed with hospitable people, a variety of wildlife and a range of physical features conducive for relaxation. I therefore extend my invitation to all the delegates to find time and sample out the rich Kenyan Culture.

With these remarks, I now have the honour and pleasure to officially inaugurate the 20th Session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT.

”

Thank you. ■

# UN/ISDR Africa high-level advocacy makes encouraging start

**Ms Feng Min Kan**  
Senior Regional Officer,  
UN/ISDR Africa,  
Nairobi, Kenya

***Malagasy President Ravalomanana has contributed to the ISDR Trust fund on disaster reduction in Africa. Ugandan President Museveni has lent an ear to the "disaster reduction message". Nigerian President Obasanjo spoke about disaster reduction at the July 2005 AU Summit in Libya...***

The January 2005 Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR II) successfully concluded with two strategic documents: the "Hyogo Declaration" and the "Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015 – Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters". The former announces a renewed political commitment to disaster-related issues; the latter provides strategic directions in addressing disaster risk reduction in the 2005-2015 decade.

To keep the momentum gained at WCDR II and to implement the priorities for action underlined in the HFA requires increased understanding and interests among higher-level national government officials, especially heads of state and government. This is especially true in Africa where people are dying of HIV/AIDS, starvation and armed conflicts on daily basis. Meanwhile, unlike in other continents, disaster risk reduction so far has not been on the list of competing priorities of heads of state and government in many African countries.

## **Trust, partnership with African governments**

To face up this challenge, UN/ISDR Africa has forged a very sound partnership with African national governments and regional organizations to promote understanding of disaster risk

reduction (DRR) and address it in the context of sustainable development in Africa. This sound partnership enables UN/ISDR Africa to focus on its strategic interventions in disaster risk reduction.

To follow up with the outcomes of WCDR II and to implement the HFA, UN/ISDR Africa established an Africa regional forum of national platforms for disaster reduction and an Africa Advisory Group (AAG) on Disaster Risk Reduction. The main objective for this is to build trust and advance partnership with national governments in promoting DRR and its mainstreaming into development planning and programmes. With the help of the Africa Advisory Group, UN/ISDR Africa was able to carry out higher-level advocacy on disaster risk reduction over the last two months.



*H.E. The President of the Republic of Madagascar, Mr Marc Ravalomanana*

## **Malagasy President Ravalomanana**

On 6 May 2005, a UN/ISDR Africa team was received by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Madagascar, Mr Marc Ravalomanana. During the meeting, the UN/ISDR Africa team informed the Malagasy president on UN/ISDR's mandate and core functions as well its major activities in Africa. President Marc Ravalomanana showed great interests in the subject. He said he

was working with donors on how to build cyclone-resilient structures for people living in cyclone-prone areas in Madagascar.

In addition, the president attached great importance to information and knowledge management in disaster risk reduction. And in support of UN/ISDR work in Africa, President Ravalomanana, on behalf of his country, made a contribution of 20,000 US dollars to the International Trust Fund on Disaster Reduction which is the UN/ISDR funding mechanism.

## **Ugandan President Museveni**

On 24 June 2005, UN/ISDR Africa Senior Regional Officer Ms Feng Min Kan made a one-day advocacy trip to Kampala, Uganda, during which she was able to meet several senior government officials, including the Ugandan first deputy Prime Minister and also minister of state for disaster preparedness, the permanent secretary in the Prime Minister's Office and the commissioner for disaster management.

Ugandan First Deputy Prime Minister Brig-Gen Moses Ali stressed the importance of disaster risk reduction and expressed personal commitment to the issue. He told the UN/ISDR Africa senior regional officer that he would brief His Excellency the

President of the Republic of Uganda, Mr Yoweri Museveni, on the outcomes of the January 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction and advise his president to talk about the importance of disaster risk reduction, among other issues, at the July 2005 AU Summit and would prepare to ask the commissioner for disaster management. The Ugandan first deputy Prime Minister also emphasized the importance and necessity of advocacy for disaster risk reduction among Ugandan parliamentarians.

National government support made the one-day mission very productive. UN/ISDR Africa learnt, later on, that First Deputy Prime Minister Brig-Gen Moses Ali had taken the issue to President Yoweri Museveni.

## Nigerian President Obasanjo

On 1 July 2005, UN/ISDR Africa Senior Regional Officer Ms Feng Min Kan was received by His Excellency Mr President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria. During the meeting, the UN/ISDR Africa official informed the Nigerian president about the objectives of her mission, UN/ISDR's mandate, core functions and major activities in Africa, and the outcomes of the January 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction. Regarding ongoing efforts to promote disaster risk reduction in Africa, the UN/ISDR Africa official asked the Nigerian president to promote the issue to other African heads of state and government by bringing disaster risk reduction matters on the agenda of forthcoming AU summits.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo demonstrated his understanding through a personal experience on risk management and pointed out that disasters affected the poor most and that therefore we need to address the issue with seriousness. The meeting was successfully wrapped up with the following comment by President Obasanjo: "Madame, you look



Meeting with H.E. The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, in his office in Abuja, Nigeria

for an advocate, you have already had one."

UN/ISDR Africa learnt, later on, that President Obasanjo had addressed the importance of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into poverty reduction policies and programmes during the July 2005 AU Summit in Sirte, Libya.

In his speech as the Chairperson of the AU Summit, he said: "After the tsunami disaster that affected Asia and Africa, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction has been paying more

attention to how to prepare adequately for natural and man-made disasters. We, in Africa, must be part of this exercise by mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction into poverty reduction policies and programmes at the national and regional levels. On this note, I call on the international community to earmark some resources for this purpose."

## Encouraging start, "triple-win situation"

The beginning of UN/ISDR Africa's higher-level advocacy is encouraging. All the more because, any success in raising awareness of the importance of disaster risk reduction and secure political support to the mainstreaming of DRR is, as Dr Olusegun E. Ojo of Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) put it, a "triple-win situation".

Firstly, it makes it easier for UN/ISDR Africa to promote a culture of disaster prevention for building disaster-resilient nations and communities.

Secondly, it enables national institutions or agencies responsible for disaster-related issues to address disaster risk reduction in a holistic and comprehensive manner together with development partners.

Thirdly, it contributes to achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. ■



Ms Feng Min Kan (UN/ISDR Africa) and Mr. Alhaji S. Makarfi (Director General of NEMA)



# Bill Clinton urges rapid advance on global risk reduction agenda

**Mr Alain Valency**

Editor,  
"Disaster Reduction in Africa"

*Former US President Bill Clinton, now the UN Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, has said: "I believe we need to move forward quickly on a global risk reduction agenda and to improve the systems and policies for disasters before they hit."*

*He also said "we cannot let this year pass without some real progress on disaster risk reduction", adding "2005 is a key year for the risk reduction agenda."*

*He made the above comments at the UN headquarters in New York on 14 July 2005, in his "Remarks to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Humanitarian Segment, Panel "Lessons Learned from the Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami".*

*The ECOSOC is one the six central organs of the UN, along with the General Assembly, the UN Security Council, the International Court of Justice, the Trusteeship Council and the Secretariat. The ECOSOC coordinates economic and social activities carried out by UN specialized agencies and institutions such as the ILO (International Labour Office), FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF, etc. The ECOSOC is made up of technical commissions and five regional economic commissions, including the Ethiopia-based Economic Commission for Africa, ECA.*

*Bill Clinton was reporting on what was achieved during his five months in office, and what was to be done next.*

*The following first part of his address focused on disaster risk reduction:*

“

Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, Officers and Members of ECOSOC, Mr. Under-Secretary General, Ladies and Gentlemen.



*Former US President Bill Clinton at the UN headquarters in New York (Photo: Eskinder Debede)*

I am honored to be given the opportunity to address you today and I have been honored to serve as the Secretary General's Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, a job I intend to continue for at least two years and perhaps longer depending upon how long the work takes. I look forward to our dialogue today and will try to abbreviate my remarks so we can spend more time in conversation.

For the last five months, I have worked on trying to do what the Secretary-General asked me to do to – make sure we had a more coordinated, well organized, more transparent process in the recovery phase; in the long term reconstruction phase, to make sure we have a uniform system of reporting and monitoring our progress; to try to make sure we come up with a **prevention and risk reduction** strategy and better emergency management procedures; and that we leave this endeavor with a set of best practices which could be used by other countries facing similar problems in the future.

Of course we all use the mantra – build

back better – we want to build back better. I want to say a few words about that. About where it is obvious and easy and where it is difficult and uncertain. I have met both in the region and here in New York and in Europe with affected government officials, NGOs, UN agencies, corporate leaders and ordinary citizens who care about these issues. Recently we convened here in New York a Global Consortium consisting of the largest multilateral and NGO contributors to tsunami relief and representatives of the affected countries, with a common commitment to improve our coordination, our financial tracking and communications, and to have a uniform system to measure progress, about which I will say more in a minute.

I have very much enjoyed the opportunity I have had to listen to the representatives of the countries, NGOs, and others about the ongoing operational challenges. These five months have confirmed my belief in the inherent value of the United Nations, the glue that makes international cooperation possible and I want to thank, as I have on previous occasions, Jan Egeland [UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs – under whose authority the UN/ISDR operates - and UN Emergency Relief Coordinator] and Margareta Wahlstrom [UN Assistant-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy UN Emergency Relief Coordinator] for the marvelous job they have done in coordinating work. You should know, in my opinion at least, that in each country, the UN teams bringing together all the agencies are doing a good job and working hard to support the work of the governments in implementing their own plans. But I believe we need to move forward quickly on a global **risk reduction** agenda and to improve the systems and policies for disasters before they hit, as well as to help accelerate the

pace of the recovery in the affected countries.

Let me just try to be as specific as I can. First of all, on the need for **disaster prevention and mitigation**. While much of the physical destruction in this massive tsunami was unavoidable, clearly the human toll would have been lower if there had been adequate **early warning** and other prevention strategies in place. From Banda Aceh [Indonesia], we have evidence of building codes, for example, as many reinforced concrete buildings remained intact, while others were swept away. Vegetation buffers appear to have made a significant difference in both Indonesia and in Sri Lanka, where mangroves in particular seem to have diluted the impact of waves on the coastline.

**Preparedness** is likely to have been a key factor in contrasting human tolls in the coastal Indian communities in the Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu [State in India], between some villages that had recently undertaken training exercises under UN Development Program-sponsored efforts and others that had not. And of course most of us have now heard about the enterprising British School girl, Tilly Smith, who had learned about tsunamis in her class a few weeks before going on holiday in Thailand, recognized the warning signs, and saved, reportedly, a hundred people who were on the beach. If early warning made a difference in Thailand, 310 miles from the epicenter, it is also clear that we could have done better in **Somalia**, almost 3,000 miles from the epicenter.

Less than a month after the tsunami struck, 168 countries gathered to draw up the **Hyogo Framework for Action**, continuing the work started in 1994 at the Yokohama disaster reduction conference. This Hyogo Framework sets out strategic goals, priorities for action, and agreed steps for implementation for governments and other stakeholders. I have only one point to make about this. We cannot let this year pass without some real progress on **disaster risk reduction**. So I urge the members of this Council to systematically implement the Hyogo Plan of Action and specifically to include disaster risk reduction policies and practices in the recovery efforts so as not to reinstate the

old vulnerabilities: to institute **disaster risk awareness** education in school curricula, to support local programs to assess risk, to raise awareness of vulnerability, and to close the gaps in capacity necessary to address those risks, and to complete the **early warning** systems on a sound and sustainable technical footing, well-integrated with other warning systems, such as those for tropical cyclones.

2005 is a key year for the **risk reduction** agenda. I have complete confidence that we will never have the tourist economies that were devastated in the Maldives and the coast of Thailand fully recovered until not only each country has an **early warning** system but there is an integrated, South Asian coordinated early warning system that encompasses all these nations. I actually believe that because of the visibility they acquired, there is an enormous potential for increased tourism in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, for example, as a result of what has happened. None of it will happen unless we have a good **early warning** system and it all works together. The countries have been quite good about agreeing to work together and set up compatible technologies, but we need to finish. Everybody has said the right things but it is very, very important to get this done and to do it now.

I would like to say a couple of words about the **emergency response**. The immediate and unprecedented humanitarian response was wonderful.

Politics and bureaucracy were sidelined, everybody worked together, but now we are in the most difficult part. The **recovery** is much, much more complex and frustrating. Everybody wants to be in a decent temporary shelter, but lots of people are still living in tents. Some people are living in temporary shelters, in very hot temperatures, that have tin roofs or sidings. It is a major problem. In Aceh [Indonesia] and Sri Lanka, some 170,000 and 70,000 people are still living in tents. The

governments are moving quickly, but we know it takes a long time to build permanent shelters for everyone. We have in the United States, people from our last hurricane who haven't been permanently sheltered yet. So this is a big issue. There are sufficient resources available to build satisfactory semi-permanent shelters. So I urge all of you to do whatever you can to ensure that whatever continuing lack of coordination and policy disputes exist on this issue don't hamper the efforts of people to have decent shelter now. On my last trip to the region, the number one frustration I found was in people who felt that they were living under more or less unbearable conditions.

Finally, I am concerned that we are not applying our knowledge and expertise of emergency response during the recovery phase and let me say what I mean by that. There aren't established protocols in place, for example, for deploying vocational trainers or putting in place project and financial tracking systems just for this phase, covering the medium to longer term work. We know these needs will arise, so again, I urge the Council to support institutional agreements and pre-positioning in **preparedness** for the recovery dimension

of what we are doing. ... ”

\* For full text of UN Special Envoy Bill Clinton's address, please contact UN/ISDDR Africa.



Former President Bill Clinton with children in Sri Lanka (Photo Clinton Foundation)

# “First Africa Drought Forum” urges holistic approach to drought risk issues

## Dr Eric Patrick

Policy Specialist,  
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Drought is the most widely reported natural hazard in Africa. Yet, the first “Africa Drought Risk & Development Policy Forum” ever held on took place only in February this year. A brief report on the event follows.

“Drought risk, as a development issue, has to be dealt with in a more holistic manner than that of simply a meteorological phenomenon or natural hazard.”

The above comment, nicely summarizing the spirit of the meeting, emerged from the first “Africa Drought Forum” held on the continent. The Forum took place from 31 January to 2 February 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya, organized by UNDP-Drylands Development Centre, UNDP-Bureau for Crisis Prevention & Recovery (UNDP-BCPR) and UN/ISDR Africa.

About 45 participants from all over Africa and also outside Africa attended the Forum: multidisciplinary and highly experienced practitioners, senior officials of sub-regional organizations, policy makers with relevant experience, key partners. However, the high cost of language interpretation restricted participation by French-speaking African countries where there is very considerable experience.

## Context

The idea of a discussion forum on issues of drought risk and development policy in Africa was conceived during an April 2003 UN/ISDR-hosted meeting of the UN *ad hoc* Working Group on Drought. A broad range of drought experts from various institutions was discussing the issue of drought as a development issue. It became clear that it had to be dealt with in a more holistic manner than that of simply a meteorological phenomenon or natural hazard. An “ideal-type” model of

what a drought vulnerable society and a drought-resilient society would look like emerged.

The participants to the April 2003 meeting also agreed that there had to be a global network of drought networks, or at least of networks more focused on the policy and risk reduction and development aspects of drought. In particular, it was felt that there was no such pan-African network so far and a recommendation was made that this be initiated, and that it would be jointly hosted by UNDP-Drylands Development Centre and UN/ISDR Africa (both institutions are based in Nairobi).

The participants felt that given the limited e-connectivity in much of Africa, an electronic network would definitely have to be supplemented by an annual face-to-face discussion opportunity, which was dubbed a “forum”. The first of what is hoped to be annual forums is the above-mentioned “First Africa Drought Forum” which took place from 31 January to 2 February 2005 – a three-day event – in Nairobi.

## Proceedings

The Forum, which brought together a multi-disciplinary group in the area of drought practice and policy, was structured around a number of issues. The program and proceedings are available on [www.undp.org/drylands](http://www.undp.org/drylands). Eight (8) clusters of ideas seems to have coalesced out of the combination of presenters’ material and discussions. The eight clusters are:

1. Market access for drylands products (both inputs and outputs), including information.
2. Livelihood diversification, particularly in terms of the degree of weather dependence of the value-added of production systems in drought-prone areas. In other words, to what degree is the value of what is produced affected by climate variability. One

could look at this locally or nationally. For example, in the wake of the 1991 drought in Zimbabwe, the country’s GDP (temporarily) dropped by some 11 % due to the weather sensitivity of the economy: the drought hit agriculture, power generation and combined to send knock-on effects through the agro-industrial processing sector.

3. Models required which allow us to integrate/mainstream drought risk into development thinking, policy and practice, especially at the strategic level. This is particularly important for chronically drought-impacted countries – which are many in Africa – for whom it thus becomes a central development issue.
4. Relationships between drought, resource access and violent conflict in the context of historic changes that have reduced access in the face of increased population pressure. Associated issues of the provision of mobile services were also discussed.
5. The desirability/feasibility of a rights-based approach to services, food security and development in general.
6. The nature of funding mechanism and the structure and institutional incentives in development bureaucracies as an obstacle to overcoming to bridging/renegotiating the relief-development gulf.
7. Regional and international experiences to managing drought risk as sources for inspiration in devising innovating solutions at national level. Collaboration on trans-boundary issues was also discussed.
8. The need to link household-level risk to government processes of decision making and development planning. Do we start at the top, middle, bottom or simultaneously? The role of NGOs and CSOs (Community Service Organizations) and other “third



parties” were also touched on. What are the entry and leverage points?

9. The need to tailor disaster risk reduction messages applied to climate risk to diverse audiences.

## Outcomes

The main objective of the meeting was to get to know each other and kick off a

networking activity. However, the emphasis at the end was more on what each party could do to promote the general message of disaster risk reduction as applied to climate risk in Africa.

Formal recommendations (see box below) emerged from the Forum, based on an implicit consensus prevailing during the discussions. The

recommendations could also be suggested as “declarations” for a “charter” on drought risk management for Africa.■

# First Africa Drought Forum

31 January to 2 February 2005

Nairobi, Kenya

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *We acknowledge the importance of the context of the international political economy of food aid and trade and its potentially significant impacts on the options for drought risk management at local and national scales. Whilst this political economy must be taken to be a “given” for planning purposes over the short term, it must be negotiated over the longer term with a view to enhancing risk management options*
2. *We emphasize the importance of political will in improving drought risk management, but do not assume its existence. It is the responsibility of Governments to create an enabling environment within which households can enhance their livelihood options and in turn contribute to national economies.*
3. *We affirm the value of traditional risk management strategies but without romanticizing them, recognizing that they are central to any successful risk management objectives and yet may need to adapt to structural changes which have occurred. Many of these systems have been breaking down under various pressures and yet their adaptive nature is a resource which is still viable but typically undervalued*
4. *We insist upon a holistic view of risk management and of drought, and therefore the necessity of engaging the perspectives of multiple disciplines and groups in conceptualizing and devising strategies to mitigate drought.*
5. *We strongly advocate for a demand-driven approach to interventions and strategies for reducing drought impact at the household level, highlighting the political and economic marginalization facing many drought-affected communities. Only through their de-marginalization will their participation be ensured, and only with their participation will drought risk impacts be addressed in cost-effective ways.*
6. *We propose the institutionalization of collaboration among parties concerned with climate risk in Africa, particularly drought, in identifying multiple objectives which could be addressed over various timeframes in realistic way, focusing first on the most drought-impacted countries.*
7. *We emphasize that the way one thinks about drought, the implicit model employed - often representing unexamined sets of assumptions - strongly affects what we believe to be the options for drought risk management. Furthermore, given the large diversity of situations even within one country, multiple perspectives must be encouraged, a range of strategies and options developed - with advantages and disadvantages and costs and applicability identified - rather than searching for a single solution.*

# MALI seeks to build capacity on natural disaster issues

## Mrs Aida M'Bo Ndembele

Advisor,  
Environment Programme,  
UNDP Mali,  
Bamako, Mali

As a result of its tropical geographical location in West Africa, Mali is exposed permanently to climate risks (uncertain rainfall often insufficient for crop and livestock production) and their disastrous effects. But these risks are also aggravated by a number of factors: (1) more than half of its large territory (1,241,000 sq. km) is a desert; (2) the land is of continental nature and is internally and externally landlocked.

Also, the two largest West African rivers, Niger and Senegal, which run right across the country over more than 2,200 km, are a blessing and an asset in normal times. However, when rainfall is excessively high, they aggravate climate risks and can trigger floods causing material and human losses. This was the case in 2001 in Selingue, and in July/August 2002 in several parts of the country, especially in the north (a lake zone) and in Kayes region (in the southwest).

## Climate change effects

In 2003, as a result of excessive rainfall, Mali, like several countries of the sub-region, suffered considerable damage as areas deprived of water for several years received an excessive quantity of water. In addition, crops are threatened every year by locust invasion and various epidemics, as was the case in 2004.

The immediate consequences of these are poor, if not loss of crops (which often results in famine) and loss of livestock. These two consequences disrupt the national economy based mainly on rural activities carried out by 80 per cent of the population.

The country also faces other natural hazards shared by the region, such as drought. Also, extremely hot fumaroles



*Staff members of the Directorate-General of Civil Protection in Mali and Mrs Aida Ndembele of UNDP Mali*

(gas emission) of up to 500 degrees C are observed in the northeastern part of the country.

And for some 30 years, Mali has been affected seriously by the effects of climate change. Drought has settled in gradually, worsened by excessive use of the vegetal cover, which leads to soil degradation.

All the above calamities and disasters have made it necessary to establish adequate response systems.

## Disaster management body established

In 1998, the government established a Directorate-General of Civil Protection (DGPC in French) whose principal mission is to manage and prevent disasters and coordinate civil protection actions carried out by various national departments and partners. Regional branches were also established in various parts of the country.

However, as a structure in charge with organizing and coordinating prevention

and relief actions, especially developing and implementing disaster and accident management plans, the DGPC so far has not been able to perform its duty fully.

The fact is that the above structures are not sufficiently equipped (human and operational capacity) for preventing and managing risks and disasters, both natural and man-made - like the Côte d'Ivoire crisis.

## UNDP Mali intervention

A natural disaster management capacity building project was therefore developed to be implemented on the basis of the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and in conformity to the « Environmental Action & Sustainable Living Conditions » pillar of the 2003-2007 Cooperation Programme signed with the Malian government. The project, which was launched in May 2004 and implemented through the Directorate-General for Civil Protection, pursues the following objectives:

- 〈 Sensitizing/training and informing various partners (state, local



*Desertification in Mali. To increase daily income, women go for charcoal and firewood business which contribute to desertification in the country*

Through the implementation of such an approach, the project aims to build the capacity of the government, decentralized local government authorities and grassroots communities so as to enable them to prevent and manage natural disasters better.

### Knowing risks

Various actions that are under way and/or planned, such as a natural disaster risk inventory and analysis, the development of national risk maps and the adoption of a disaster relief provision legislation by the National Assembly, are all positive developments for Mali. Therefore, UNDP has joined hands with the Malian government to ensure that reliable information are available and shared, and adequate prevention measures taken and made known to those communities concerned.

After taking part, with the international community, in the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Japan in January 2005, Mali is expected to implement efficient integrated strategies for adaptation to climate change for the sake of better ecosystem management and disaster risk reduction. In fact, the strategies would help the country to attain sustainable economic and social development. ■

government authorities, decentralized departments, civil society, etc.) on risks and disasters, while also carrying out advocacy work on prevention.

- Developing mechanisms for information exchange on natural risk and disaster management issues between local, regional and national levels.
- Providing support to the establishment of legal and institutional frameworks expected to help harmonize development policies with risk reduction policies.
- Developing participatory and inter-sectoral regional risk reduction plans that enhance the value of traditional know-how.
- Developing a coherent national plan for natural disaster management and reduction with beneficiaries and local UN System partners... and in close collaboration with UN/ISDR Africa, UNDP-BCPR (Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery) and UNITAR (UN Institute for Training and Research).

based on clear and well-defined roles for each of the above players.

For instance, regarding grassroots communities, the focus is on “developing risk knowledge” :

Through the adoption of communal disaster risk analysis sheets (FICAR in French) that are currently being developed by each circle/commune/region. A regional map/plan of major risks will be later on developed to be mainstreamed in Mali’s national plan of major risks.



*River used as dumping ground for domestic and industrial waste*

### Strategic partners

In its implementation, the project especially emphasizes partnership with NGOs, local government authorities, state institutions, grassroots communities,



# ECOWAS: Experts discuss establishment of Disaster Management Mechanism for West Africa

UN/ISDR Africa  
Nairobi, Kenya

***The Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, plans to establish a disaster management mechanism for West Africa. To that effect, a meeting of experts was held in March 2005 in Nigeria. The following is the final report on the meeting.***

Convinced of the urgent need to enhance West Africa's capacity to prevent and manage disasters, the 51<sup>st</sup> session of the Council of Ministers held in Accra from 15 to 18 December 2003 decided to establish a sub-regional disaster prevention and management mechanism.

The first meeting of the Ambassadors representing the four countries designated as members of the technical committee set up for that purpose, namely Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Niger and Nigeria, was held on 27 May 2004 at the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat. The meeting recommended that a meeting of experts from the four Member States be convened to consider technical modalities for the establishment of the mechanism.

The meeting of Experts was held from 8 to 10 March 2005 at the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat, presided over by the ECOWAS Executive Secretary, Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, who was accompanied by senior officials of the Executive Secretariat.

In his opening address, the Executive Secretary underlined the devastating effects of disasters on the economies of West African countries. He however reiterated the determination of ECOWAS to reduce not only disasters but also armed conflicts, and stressed the need to integrate disaster prevention and management in West Africa in the



*Some participants at the Meeting of Experts*

ongoing development plans and programmes. To conclude, he expressed the hope that the meeting would come up with relevant recommendations that would ensure effective implementation of the project.

At the end of the Executive Secretary's address, the meeting elected a bureau chaired by Niger, current ECOWAS Chairman.

United Nations agencies (UN/ISDR, UN/OCHA, UNHCR) and civil society organisations were represented at the meeting.

## Background

The West African sub-region has had its fair share of natural and man-made disasters. Studies have shown that the consequences of such occurrences are more disastrous for poor countries than for the rich countries.

Over the years, the concept and definition of disasters as well as their causes and effects have changed and

more emphasis is now placed on the social effects of disasters and the collective capacity to cope with them.

The natural disasters which occur or can occur in West Africa are: climatological hazards, seismic activity, conflicts, pest infestation and crop disease, epidemics, industrial and chemical accidents, technological systems failure, and fire.

## Objective

The meeting was convened to consider modalities for the establishment of a disaster management mechanism in West Africa.

## Outcome of deliberations

Discussions centred essentially on the following four points:

- Institutional and legal framework
- Common policy
- Operational framework
- Resource mobilisation

**A. Institutional and legal framework**

- The meeting agreed on the need to establish a well-funded Unit within the Humanitarian Affairs Department at the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat to coordinate disaster prevention and management, and a Technical Committee made up of experts from Member States.
- The Disaster Management Unit should organise annual consultations with the Technical Committee.

**B. Common policy**

- Successful implementation of the mechanism would require a common sub-regional strategy which would involve:
- Designation of national focal points
- Adoption of a common training policy on technical matters
- Identification of capacities

**C. Operational framework**

The proposed operational framework is as follows:

- A central coordination organ
- The countries in the sub-region
- International agencies
- Local communities

**D. Resource mobilisation**

- Concerning resources, the meeting agreed on the need to:
- Explore the possibility of funding the mechanism from the ECOWAS Peace Fund
- Study the possibility of organising training sessions on resource mobilisation
- Involve other partners by establishing strategic partnerships

**Observations****A. Shortcomings**

- Absence of common vision
- Lack of coordination and cooperation at regional level
- Inadequate information
- Inadequate capacity and training at regional level

**B. Conditions for success**

The ECOWAS Member States indicated that they were willing and ready to support whatever measures the ECOWAS

Executive Secretariat may adopt in order to overcome the shortcomings noted above.

**Recommendations**

The Experts made the following recommendations:

**A. Institutional framework**

- A disaster prevention and management unit should be established within the Humanitarian Affairs Department of the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat;
- Meetings of the Technical Committee should be institutionalised;
- The Member States should designate their national focal points.

**B. Common Policy**

- A study should be undertaken on the major disasters in order to identify the priority areas of action at regional level;
- A sub-regional orientation strategy on disaster reduction should be developed; disaster reduction should be integrated in development plans and programmes;
- A regional consultative meeting should be organised in order to involve Member States more closely in the definition of the development strategy and sub-regional initiatives;
- The support of the Heads of State and Government should be sought in order to ensure that authorities at sub-regional level participate actively in disaster prevention and management for sustainable development.

**C. Operational framework**

- A study should be undertaken on the vulnerability of the countries in order to determine the major risks they are facing;
- A detailed list of disaster management tools available in each country should be prepared;
- Every effort should be made to ensure compatibility and complementarity of equipment and

materials;

- Appropriate institutions should be established;
  - The defence and security forces should be involved in disaster management efforts.
- D. Resource mobilisation**
- The Community should consider what can be done to strengthen the ECOWAS Peace Fund and expand its scope so that resources from the fund could be used to finance disaster management activities.
  - Training programmes on resource mobilisation should be organised in partnership with UN agencies, other international organisations and NGOs.

**E. Partnership**

- Closer cooperation ties should be developed with partners, including UN agencies, humanitarian organisations and institutions, multinationals, private sector organisations, governments, civil society organisations, etc.

The participants expressed the hope that UN agencies would provide the necessary assistance toward the establishment of the sub-regional disaster management mechanism. ■



Children at risk (famine in Niger) - Photo WFP

## DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

# SADC regional training plan for information management ready

**Mr Benedict Tembo**

Journalist,  
Lusaka, Zambia

*Deficiencies in information sharing have led to unnecessary deaths in Southern Africa. Such deficiencies are said to be even worse due to lack of knowledge and appropriate communication systems. SADC countries are addressing the issue, writes Zambian journalist Benedict Tembo.*

Five hours after a quake struck northwestern Sumatra, Indonesia, triggering a massive *tsunami* with a series of waves that quickly travelled through the Indian Ocean, some African countries were hit.

Somalia was among the countries affected. Others were South Africa, Madagascar, Kenya and Tanzania.

Tanzania, which lost 13 citizens, believes that the movement of the tsunami waves would have allowed enough time for warning to, especially, affected countries but there was no any such kind of warning until the disaster struck, resulting into deaths.

Faced with this lack of information, Southern African Development Community (SADC) member countries have realized the need for information sharing in all aspects of disaster prevention, preparedness and response.

Coming to the aid of the 13-nation grouping is *Inwent*, a German capacity-building organization which seeks to fill the information gap among SADC countries. *Inwent* organized a "Regional Training Plan for Information Management" from 19 to 22 April 2005 in Tanzania.

## Information "key" to successful measures against disasters

The event, which took place in the coastal town of Bagamoyo (exit harbour

for slaves - a disaster to humanity), was a capacity building come together in sector-crossing information management for trans-boundary disaster prevention and preparedness.

Opening the workshop, Rose Lugembe, Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office in Tanzania, said disaster management depended on fast and accurate information collection and dissemination. "The reason for this school of thought lies in the fact that information is key to any successful implementation of measures against disasters," she said.

Ms Lugembe said the impacts of the year 2000 floods in Mozambique could have been reduced had people been furnished with prior information about their vulnerability to imminent floods in their areas of residence. She said although the 26 December 2004 earthquake and *tsunami* had taken place some 5,000 kilometres away, it affected Tanzania, leading to the death of 13 people.

"These two examples indicate deficiencies in terms of information and its dissemination to people. Deficiencies in trans-boundary information sharing are even worse due to lack of knowledge and appropriate communication systems. We must find a way to overcome this through organized mechanisms and plan of implementation," she prodded participants.

## SADC regional training plan ready

Sussane Breuer, the Berlin-based *Inwent* project manager, said the world became aware of the importance of disaster reduction because of the *tsunami* which had happened days before the start of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan, in January this year.

"The world became aware of the importance of measures about risks, preparedness measures and a functioning

early warning system crucial to avoidance or at least mitigation of such disastrous impacts of natural disasters," Ms Breuer said.

She added: "Here again, we have seen: There were experts who knew about the event in time, but there was no information system or structure to send the important warning to responsible authorities, let alone to the affected people."

Referring to the workshop, Ms Breuer said a lot of good ideas had been developed in this "golden age", adding that *Inwent* would soon begin the planning for the next steps.

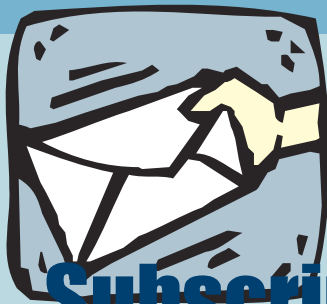
Mr Florian Bemmerlein-Lux, an expert on disaster management, said the workshop in Bagamoyo came finally to at least three good results. "The training plan is ready and the first three courses will be implemented. Enough material was collected to start writing concepts for a project proposal as soon as the call for proposals is out," he said.

Mr Bemmerlein-Lux, who is based in Nürnberg, Germany, runs a consultancy firm called "Eco-Institutional Development Consult".

The workshop in Bagamoyo was a continuation of a process which began in Pretoria, South Africa, in August 2004. The process sought to develop a regional training plan for information management in disaster risk management. ■

1 Benedict Tembo is a member of the "Journalists in Africa for Disaster Risk Reduction Network" (JADRR Net) established in December 2004 with the support of UN/ISDR Africa.





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Submissions may include photographs, graphs, charts, and other illustrations. However, they should not exceed 1,500 words. Brevity is appreciated in order to display the broadest possible spectrum of ideas and case histories. When using acronyms of national and even regional bodies please quote the name of the agency or institution in full the first time you mention it. It is also essential for you to include at the end of your text, the following information:

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