



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
 Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction
Second session

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**Report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its
 second session**

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I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention

A. Matters calling for action

Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action

1. The Committee stresses the importance of speedy implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.¹ The implementation not only should cover economic and social aspects but also make use of information and communications technology and space technology to enhance disaster preparedness. The secretariat is requested to explore the possibility of enhancing the outreach of early warning systems information and ensuring its successful delivery to end-users through, among other things, the established Asia-Pacific Gateway for Disaster Risk Reduction and Development.

Recent initiatives in the area of disaster risk reduction

2. The Committee strongly supports the continued implementation by the secretariat of recent ESCAP initiatives in the area of disaster risk reduction, including further development of the Asia-Pacific Gateway for Disaster Risk Reduction and Development, and the Regional Cooperative Mechanism on Disaster Monitoring and Early Warning, Particularly Drought, the two new modules of the Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders, which is the flagship programme of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communications Technology for Development, as well as the publication of the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2012* in cooperation with the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and other partners. The Committee recommends that capacity-building, training and outreach activities be carried out to promote the Gateway and other initiatives, build up partnerships, and secure adequate resources, including funding.

Connectivity in the Pacific islands

3. Cognizant that the Pacific islands face unique difficulties due to their small population, scattered land areas and frequently recurring disasters, the Committee requests that the secretariat continue its efforts to improve Pacific connectivity and access to and use of satellite imagery and that it further assist the Pacific islands with capacity-building in space applications, including telemedicine, e-education, e-governance, and community e-centres with a focus on disaster management.

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission

Recent trends in disasters and their socio-economic and environmental aspects

4. Considering the impact of disasters on societies, the Committee recommends that the development of standards, methodologies and guidelines for disaster statistics be given higher priority by international and regional statistical communities than is currently the case.

¹ A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

5. Aware of the limitations of the Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT), which only records disasters above a particular threshold, the Committee recommends that Governments systematically collect data on small disasters, the aggregated impact of which often exceeds that of large disasters.

6. The Committee requests that the secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme and their development partners increase their support to building national capacities in the collection and analysis of disaster data for hazard and vulnerability assessments, disaster preparedness and mitigation and contingency planning.

7. The Committee also requests that the secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme provide more training on practical disaster assessment methodologies, including on how to conduct disaster assessments more efficiently.

Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action in Asia and the Pacific

8. The Committee recommends that the secretariat continue promoting regional cooperative mechanisms and capacity development efforts for disaster risk reduction, including on information, communications and space technologies, to accelerate the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, according due priority to countries with special needs.

9. In view of the importance of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in economic and social development planning, the Committee recommends that institutional capacity be strengthened through regional cooperation and continued regional advisory services.

Enhancing regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific

The Asia-Pacific Disaster Report

10. The Committee endorses the establishment of an advisory board and editorial committee to guide the preparation of the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2012* and its terms of reference. The Committee recommends that the *Report* continue to feature such elements as economic and social analysis of the impacts of disasters, descriptions of regional cooperation and analysis of the role of space applications and information and communications technology (ICT) in disaster risk reduction, in addition to new elements, such as (a) information on champions for disaster risk reduction, (b) social and psychological analysis, (c) coverage of community practices vis-à-vis global perspectives, (d) analysis of a possible linkage between the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Millennium Development Goals and (e) linkage to the *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*.

11. The Committee recommends that all stakeholders of disaster risk reduction make full use of the Asia-Pacific Gateway for Disaster Risk Reduction and establish partnerships with the site in order to improve access to information and prevent duplication of work.

ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries

12. The Committee hopes that the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries becomes a more proactive mechanism to improve regional resilience to disasters and, in that regard, appeals to the international community for additional support.

13. Recognizing that many types of disasters have transboundary effects and can only be predicted and properly mitigated through bilateral, subregional and regional cooperation, the Committee encourages the use of new technology, including satellites, for monitoring disasters and adverse weather conditions to reduce disaster risk.

Mainstreaming innovative information and communications technology in disaster risk reduction

14. The Committee requests that the secretariat accord high priority to capacity-building and training in information and communications technologies, including space-based technologies.

15. The Committee requests that the secretariat take steps to broaden the scope of the work of the ESCAP Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP) and to align it better with the core agenda of ESCAP in promoting inclusive and sustainable development.

II. Proceedings

A. Agenda item 4

Recent trends in disasters and their socio-economic and environmental aspects

16. The Committee had before it two information notes entitled “Importance of disaster risk reduction in achieving the Millennium Development Goals” (E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/INF/4) and “Addressing disaster risk reduction and development through improved data on disasters” (E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/INF/5).

17. A high-level panel discussion on recent trends in disasters and their socio-economic and environmental aspects was held. The panellists were: Mr. Asit Kumar Mukutmoni, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, Bangladesh; Mr. Shankar Prasad Koirala, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Nepal; Ms. Crispina B. Abat, Chief, Planning Division, Office of Civil Defense, Philippines; and Mr. Dugkeun Park, Senior Analyst, National Emergency Management Agency, Republic of Korea. The panel was presided over by the Chair of the Committee and moderated by the Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management of Bangladesh.

18. Mr. Shankar Prasad Koirala discussed the impact of the Koshi floods in 2008 and the livelihood programme launched for the victims. There had been extensive damage to livestock and housing. The damage assessment had been carried out by the Government of Nepal, the Asian Development Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme. The Government had provided a comprehensive compensation package for the victims of the Koshi

floods. The challenges facing Nepal in connection with the Koshi floods included the dependence of communities on humanitarian support during the recovery phase. The Government of Nepal had approved a National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management in 2009.

19. Ms. Crispina B. Abat presented her country's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Framework. The country had shifted its approach from disaster preparedness and response to disaster management in the 1980s, to disaster risk management in the 1990s and to disaster risk reduction as of 2005. The Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, which had become law in May 2010, had paved the way for the adoption of a disaster risk reduction and management approach that was holistic, integrated and proactive in lessening the socio-economic and environmental impacts of disasters.

20. Mr. Dugkeun Park shared the regional cooperation initiatives taken by the Republic of Korea and emphasized the importance of cooperating as a region to reduce disaster risks. In October 2010, the National Emergency Management Agency of the Republic of Korea had hosted the fourth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. The Conference had adopted the Incheon Declaration and Regional Roadmap and Action Plan, which was set to be reviewed every six months at meetings of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) Asian Partnership on Disaster Reduction (IAP). He invited partners and countries in the region to participate actively in the implementation of the first regional initiative pertaining to disaster risk reduction through climate change adaptation.

21. Mr. Asit Kumar Mukutmoni described the pressing challenges posed by disasters in the Asian and Pacific region. Socio-economic and environmental impacts of disasters had worsened poverty and inequality, and destroyed the development gains of countries. Noting that disasters were increasing and that, despite lower numbers of fatalities, economic losses had increased, he highlighted the need to coordinate efforts in disaster risk reduction to address the problems posed by increasing disaster risks. As moderator of the high-level panel discussion, he summarized a number of observations for consideration by the Committee.

22. Following the panel discussion, the Committee commenced deliberations on the item.

23. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Mongolia; Pakistan; and Russian Federation.

24. It was pointed out that, in recent years, countries in the region had become prone to more disasters of various types, including floods, drought, desertification, extreme meteorological conditions that adversely affected agricultural activities, snow and dust storms, wildfires, earthquakes and tsunamis, which affected millions of people. The economic damage caused by the disasters had increased accordingly, and the sustainable economic and social development of the countries involved had suffered as a result.

25. Serious concern was expressed about the threats posed by disasters to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and the relevance of introducing disaster risk reduction programmes into development planning was underlined. In that respect, one representative expressed appreciation for the secretariat's introduction of an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction that addressed socio-economic development issues.

26. Several delegations expressed appreciation for the support provided by the international community, including ESCAP, ISDR, UNDP and other United Nations organizations, in disaster risk reduction, and looked forward to further regional cooperation to continue reducing the risks posed by disasters. Support was expressed for the knowledge triangle, which had been proposed by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, for knowledge sharing that was of mutual benefit to China, Indonesia and Pakistan on disaster risk reduction and management, and it was suggested that ESCAP should continue to facilitate such regional collaboration among countries.

27. One delegation noted the presentation of a plan of action pertaining to the development of an effective and efficient international emergency management mechanism at the third session of the Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

28. The Committee acknowledged that making disaster data comparable over time and across different disasters and regions was challenging and that developing countries needed guidance and assistance in building the capacity to compile sound disaster statistics and establish national disaster databases. Coordination between disaster management agencies and statistical offices was also of critical importance.

B. Agenda item 5

Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action

29. The Committee had before it document E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/1, entitled “Integrating disaster risk reduction into social-economic development policies in Asia and the Pacific”, and the background information document E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/INF/8, entitled “Achievements and challenges in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action in Asia and the Pacific”.

30. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Afghanistan; Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; Indonesia; Japan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; Nepal; Pakistan; and Russian Federation.

31. The Committee noted the progress made by different countries on developing national policies and institutional arrangements at the provincial and local levels on implementing disaster risk reduction strategies, which considerably strengthened their capacities for building resilience. Recognizing that disaster risk reduction was fundamental for sustainable socio-economic development, the Committee stressed the importance of putting in place suitable strategies, plans and programmes, especially with regard to mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development policies, creating and strengthening national integrated disaster risk reduction mechanisms, and implementing key activities as described in the Hyogo Framework for Action.

32. The Committee noted the challenges faced in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. One of the key challenges was making disaster data available so that they could be integrated into risk reduction strategies. It noted in particular the challenge related to data constraints on addressing social vulnerability. One representative expressed support for efforts made by the secretariat in collaboration with partner agencies, including the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the United Nations Development Programme and the

Asian Disaster Reduction Center, in developing regional disaster statistics derived from official governmental sources.

33. The Committee highlighted the importance of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into economic and social development planning and noted the progress made by several countries in that area. The Committee noted that the lack of institutional capacity had been a constraining factor in several countries, which needed to be supported through regional cooperation efforts. In that respect, the representatives of Afghanistan, Cambodia and Nepal expressed appreciation for the regional advisory services in disaster risk reduction provided by the secretariat.

34. Acknowledging that mainstreaming disaster risk reduction also contributed to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, the Committee expressed the view that priority should be given to that area and to countries that were considerably behind in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action.

35. One representative noted that the focus of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action should not be limited to economic and social aspects but should also address the use of ICT and space technology to enhance disaster preparedness. In that regard, the representative also noted that the Russian Federation had presented a proposal at the third session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to study how multilateral organizations could use diagnostic and hydrometeorological technologies more effectively in disaster preparedness. The representative also offered to share his country's initiatives on enhancing the safety of power plants, some of which involved the inadmissibility of constructing such installations in areas prone to natural hazards, such as tsunamis.

36. While expressing appreciation for the secretariat's efforts on promoting regional cooperation on space and ICT applications, several representatives highlighted the importance of strengthening capacity to make more effective use of advanced technologies for disaster preparedness, including risk assessment and emergency response. The secretariat's efforts on imparting training to key institutions on post-disaster damage and loss assessment were highly appreciated. One representative expressed profound appreciation for the secretariat's efforts to support his country by sharing knowledge, especially regarding space technology applications to build resilience to floods.

37. Some representatives stressed the need to promote regional cooperative mechanisms and resource-sharing arrangements for disaster risk reduction and climate change risk reduction, including those involving information, communications and space technologies, to improve different types of hazard identification and preparedness planning as well as partnerships and collaboration with regional and subregional organizations.

38. Several representatives requested that the secretariat further enhance partnerships and collaboration with other United Nations entities, such as the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office for Outer Space Affairs, and with regional and subregional organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) and the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), in the area of disaster risk management and risk reduction.

C. Agenda item 6

Enhancing regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific

39. The Committee had before it notes by the secretariat on enhancing regional cooperation, knowledge and capacity for disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/2) and on the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries (E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/3).

40. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Afghanistan; Bangladesh; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Mongolia; Pakistan; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

41. Representatives of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, the Asian Disaster Reduction Center, the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction also made statements.

42. The Committee emphasized the importance of effective early warning systems, including timely and effective hydrometeorological forecasting, for preventing and mitigating the impact of disasters. The Committee highlighted the importance of ensuring that early warnings reached and were understood by the end-users. The Committee noted the request of one delegation that the secretariat, other agencies and partner countries provide assistance, including training for personnel, on the establishment of a modern ICT-based early warning system to predict earthquakes and other natural disasters. The same delegation also requested capacity-building assistance in the collection and assessment of disaster data.

43. The Committee noted that the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA) had been made the Pacific node of the ESCAP Regional Cooperative Mechanism on Disaster Monitoring and Early Warning, Particularly Drought.

44. The Committee noted with satisfaction the publication of the first *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report*,² which had been initiated and jointly prepared by ESCAP and UNISDR. One delegation emphasized the relevance and usefulness of the *Report*, particularly to the Central Asian subregion.

45. Emphasizing that the *Report* should cover all subregions, including the Pacific, the Committee discussed sundry elements for inclusion in the next *Report*, which was scheduled to be published in 2012. New areas that were explored included social, behavioural and psychological analysis of the impacts of disasters; champions for disaster risk reduction; investment for key infrastructure to increase disaster resiliency; strengthening of local capacity for disaster risk reduction; and progress made in ESCAP-related regional mechanisms.

² Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, *The Asia-Pacific Disaster Report, 2010: Protecting Development Gains—Reducing Disaster Vulnerability and Building Resilience in Asia and the Pacific*. Available from www.unescap.org/idd/pubs/Asia-Pacific-Disaster-Report%20-2010.pdf.

46. Citing substantive linkages between the regional *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report* and the *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, the Committee recommended that the next issues of the two reports, which were scheduled respectively for 2012 and 2013, use common data sources and comparable methodologies and that their outlines be coordinated in order to create synergies and maximize their impact.

47. The Committee agreed with the suggestion of the representative of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme that the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report* include analysis and address data issues related to emerging urban risks.

48. The Committee expressed support for the production of the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2012* jointly by the secretariat and UNISDR and for the launching of the *Report* at the Fifth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk reduction, which was scheduled to be held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in October 2012.

49. Recognizing the importance of having the proper modalities in place for developing the *Report*, the Committee agreed to the establishment of an Advisory Board and an Editorial Committee. The Committee agreed to terms of reference for both. It was agreed that the Advisory Board would provide guidance to the Editorial Committee on a broad range of issues, including the appropriateness of the theme, the arrangement of the content, the choice of lead convening authors and contributing authors, the future direction of work, and the mobilization of resources for the Committee's activities.

50. Regarding the membership of the Advisory Board, the Committee expressed support for the voluntary participation of senior-level Government officials from the countries that had hosted and would host the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as the host country of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. Two additional members would be invited from the Pacific and from North and Central Asia.

51. The terms of reference for the Editorial Committee stipulated that it would be responsible for every aspect of the publishing process, including the choice of the theme, the formulation of the content, the choice of convening lead authors, the organization of review meetings, the approval process, the printing, the launching, and the overall schedule for the completion of work. The Editorial Committee would submit the main items related to the publication of the *Report*, through either correspondence or organized meetings, to the Advisory Board for its comments with a deadline for feedback, which would be incorporated as appropriate. The final draft would be approved by the Advisory Board.

52. The Committee expressed support for joint management of the Editorial Committee by ESCAP and UNISDR. The Editorial Committee would be composed mainly of ESCAP and UNISDR staff, but guest editors could be invited. It would have two editors, two executive editors and two secretaries, who would have the same authority but would be responsible for different chapters. Other members of the Committee would be nominated by them but would have equal representation and the same authority.

53. The Committee expressed strong support for the continued development of the Asia-Pacific Gateway for Disaster Risk Reduction and Development. The representative of ADPC highlighted the potential of the Gateway in improving access to information on good practices, policy options and programmes related to disaster risk reduction in socio-economic

development. The Gateway was a platform for encouraging regional cooperation, networking and communities of practice. ADPC expressed commitment to and support for the continued partnership with ESCAP.

54. In further developing the Gateway, the Committee highlighted the need for regional cooperation, as well as the need to improve access to regionally aggregated information, knowledge and best practices on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development at the national level. It was agreed that the Gateway should be open to all users at all levels in order to make a significant impact in reducing risks and vulnerability to disasters.

55. The Committee was of the view that the Gateway should engage in partnerships and information sharing with other portals, initiatives and disaster command/management centres, agencies and organizations at the national as well as subregional and regional levels. It noted that further expansion of the definition of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction was needed in order to include other relevant ministries in the outreach and collaborative process.

56. Given that language and capacity barriers had been highlighted as limitations to regional cooperation, the Committee emphasized the need for capacity-building, training and outreach activities to promote the Gateway, build up its partnership base and secure adequate resources, including funding.

57. Recalling his country's experience in dealing with the consequences of a severe drought in 2010 and the assistance received from several countries in assessing it, the representative of the Russian Federation highlighted the importance of timely forecasting of droughts for the region and the further potential of regional cooperation in mitigating severe consequences of drought. The Russian Federation was prepared to continue supporting the mechanism for monitoring and early warning on drought and other major disasters in the Asia-Pacific region, in partnership with China, India, the Republic of Korea and Thailand. The Russian Federation could consider providing the latest images from the remote-sensing satellite Meteor-M.

58. The representative of Thailand recalled the establishment of the Tsunami Regional Trust Fund in 2005 with his Government's donation of \$10 million and subsequent cash and in kind contributions from Bangladesh, Nepal, the Netherlands, Sweden and Turkey. The Fund had recently been renamed the ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness.

59. The Committee commended the achievements of one of the Fund's key projects, which had grown into an independent organization known as the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES), which was supporting capacity-building for end-to-end early warning for earthquakes and tsunamis in 26 countries in the Afro-Asian region. The representative of India informed the Committee that his Government had been elected to chair the RIMES Executive Council, and that his Government would make technical expertise available in forecasting tsunamis and providing information on other hazards under the RIMES platform. The Committee welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to share experiences with and provide training to other countries on seismology, active tectonics, floods and geographic information systems.

60. The delegation of Afghanistan acknowledged the advisory services extended to its country by the secretariat for development of the Strategic National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction, which had been adopted by the Government. The delegation requested the secretariat to help integrate RIMES to support capacity development for early warning system. The delegation also requested the secretariat to include Afghanistan in the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Disaster Monitoring and Early Warning, Particularly Drought as one of the key beneficiary countries due to the country's perennial vulnerability to drought. The delegation invited the secretariat to participate in and contribute to the regional conference that the Government was hosting for the members of the Economic Cooperation Organization, which was scheduled to be held from 25 to 27 July 2011.

61. The Committee was informed that the Russian hydrometeorological service had established the North Eurasia Climate Centre, a multifunctional regional climate centre under the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The goal of the Centre was to improve the quality of hydrometeorological information supplied to the member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, in particular long-term forecasts, which could be used for disaster risk reduction. The delegation of the Russian Federation encouraged the secretariat to establish working relations with the Centre and to use the materials developed by the Centre in its own work.

62. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed gratitude and appreciation for the adoption by the Commission of resolution 67/4 of 25 May 2011 on the establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management.

63. The representative of Bangladesh expressed appreciation for the collaboration between the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT) and the Government of Bangladesh. He informed the Committee that the Centre was developing two new training modules on the role of ICT in disaster risk management and addressing climate change, and had organized a regional training of trainers course on both modules which had been held in the Republic of Korea in February 2011. He also informed the Committee that, following that course, the Government of Bangladesh had conducted a national workshop on the theme of "Climate change, carbon trading and ICT" for officials from the Ministry of Science and Information and Communications Technology, and the Ministry of Environment and Forests, while another national workshop was planned for July 2011 to train officials from other ministries.

64. The Committee was informed about activities undertaken by the secretariat in Central Asia. In September 2010, a seminar involving experts in forecasting had been held in Astana in order to develop a strategy for disaster risk reduction in Central Asia. The planned future activities included a compendium of best practices for forecasting in Central Asia and a follow-up meeting in November 2011, to be held in Baku back-to-back with a meeting of the Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). It was noted that the compendium would contribute to the work of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones and the Typhoon Committee.

65. The Committee noted with satisfaction the progress of the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP) regarding the establishment of the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Disaster Monitoring and Early Warning, Particularly Drought. It was

suggested that the scope of the Mechanism could be expanded to cover other major disasters, such as floods (including glacial lakes outburst floods), especially for the pre-disaster planning, mitigation and post-disaster recovery parts of disaster management.

66. The Committee was appreciative of the satellite imagery training given to Pacific island countries, and it expressed the desire to see RESAP fulfil the broader vision that was present at its inception in the 1990s by becoming an integral part of the core ESCAP agenda of inclusive and sustainable economic and social development.

D. Agenda item 7

Mainstreaming innovative information and communications technology in disaster risk reduction

67. The Committee had before it document E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/4 on expanding connectivity to disaster-affected communities through the innovative use of information and communications technology and disaster-related information.

68. The Committee benefited from the discussions conducted by four high-level panellists, namely Mr. Imran Iqbal, Member, Space Application Research, Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) and moderator of the panel; Mr. Adthaporn Singhawichai, Director, Research and International Cooperation Bureau, Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Ministry of Interior, Thailand; Mr. B.B. Singh, Joint Advisor on Communications and Information Technology, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), India; and Mr. Sergey V. Cherkas, Head, Implementation Directorate, International Public Committee on International Global Monitoring Aerospace System (IGMASS), International Committee on the IGMASS Project Implementation (ICPI) Executive Secretary.

69. Mr. Imran Iqbal made a presentation on the effective use of ICT, including space technology, in disaster responses. Since 2005, Pakistan had experienced earthquakes, cyclones, floods and landslides, which had affected millions of people and resulted in economic losses amounting to billions of dollars. The monitoring of disasters through satellite remote sensing technology had assisted in providing timely and accurate assessments of the damage in affected areas and facilitating planned and coordinated response efforts. Similarly, during the massive earthquake which had struck northern Pakistan on 8 October 2005 and the floods which had lasted for several months in 2010, communications satellites had enabled vital connectivity, while satellite imagery and geographical information systems had provided information and maps that had made relief and rescue operations more effective. International, regional and national-level organizations, such as the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development and the United States Geological Survey, and initiatives, such as Sentinel Asia and the International Charter Space and Major Disasters, had provided imagery and maps to the national space agency of Pakistan to assist during the disasters.

70. Mr. Adthaporn Singhawichai highlighted how innovative ICTs were being used for disaster risk reduction in Thailand. National efforts for developing a disaster data warehouse for integrated disaster management would collect standardized data from the provincial level and aggregate the data at the national level. Such information would be used for analysis of

disaster intensity, for early warning, for conducting damage assessments, and for better preparedness for disasters. An information-sharing platform would be promoted. Challenges included standardizing the information format and ensuring local participation in developing and utilizing the data warehouse. Gaps that needed to be addressed included expertise and experiences from regional and international partners, case studies on good and best practices, and technical guidance.

71. Mr. B.B. Singh mentioned that India had undergone a paradigm shift from focusing on disaster relief efforts to implementing a holistic approach using a state-of-the-art digital communication and information technology-centred system for disaster management that was integrated, multi-layered, reliable and responsive. ICT was an integral part of that approach, especially with regard to last-mile connectivity for better early warning at the community level. Optimal redundancy and reserve levels were to be maintained as part of the effectiveness of that system. The overall objective was to connect each and every village and provide reliable services.

72. Mr. Sergey V. Cherkas informed the Committee that IGMASS was a system of systems for early warning of disasters, noting that it could also be used for tackling dangers related to meteors, asteroids and space debris. The system was intended to assist in social, economic, seismic, environmental and geophysical security issues as well as to promote unified and joint development of information, navigation and telecommunications resources for solving humanitarian issues through the provision of services, such as distance education telemedicine. During the last two years, IGMASS had evolved from being a scientific study to becoming an operational system of systems within the framework of broad international cooperation.

73. Following the panel discussion, the Committee commenced deliberations on the item.

74. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Bangladesh; Cambodia; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Mongolia; Nepal; and Russian Federation.

75. The representative of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) also made a statement.

76. The Committee was informed by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran that the country had established a disaster-scientific park and extended academic education in such areas as seismology, geo-hazards, disaster management, geographic information systems, medical geology, and remote sensing.

77. The Committee, while expressing serious concern about the threats posed by natural disasters, emphasized the critical role played by ICT, including with regard to space technology, in the various phases of disaster risk reduction and response. Space technology-enabled communications had assumed a vital role when terrestrial communications systems were destroyed or not functioning as a result of a disaster. Satellite-enabled text messaging and mobile communications were also very useful in early warning as well as in assisting in relief and rescue efforts.

78. The Committee noted the importance of continuing to provide capacity-building assistance and training to countries in need on the use of ICT, including space-based information.

79. The Committee was informed of the progress made by several Governments in implementing disaster risk management activities, such as the establishment of disaster management centres, preparedness, response and recovery plans, data warehousing and standardization, and of challenges and needs that were apparent in their respective countries.

80. Some delegations expressed support for the establishment of an Asia-Pacific regional platform for disaster communications capacities with emergency communications as its core component, as had earlier been recommended by the Regional Inter-agency Working Group on ICT at its fourteenth meeting. The Committee noted the views expressed by some delegations that the secretariat should take concrete action towards establishing such a platform in cooperation with the members of the Regional Inter-agency Working Group on ICT, including the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity. One delegation recognized the need for further discussions on that initiative. The secretariat noted a request to organize an open-ended intergovernmental meeting in order to ensure thorough consideration of that initiative by the member States.

81. The Committee noted the timeliness of the convening of the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on a Cooperation Mechanism for Emergency Communications and DRR, which was to be held in Mongolia from 8 to 10 July 2011 and organized by ITU in cooperation with the Information, Communications, Technology and Post Authority of Mongolia and the secretariat. While noting that the work of RESAP had contributed to the Regional Cooperative Mechanism on Disaster Monitoring and Early Warning, particularly Drought, some delegations stated that the Programme's vision needed to be broadened and crafted into the secretariat's core agenda of inclusive and sustainable development.

82. In the wake of the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the representative of Japan expressed his gratitude to China, India, the Republic of Korea, Thailand and the United States of America for providing earth observation satellite data via various channels, including Sentinel Asia. An exhibition on space applications for disaster risk reduction organized for the Committee by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency was also commended.

83. The Committee expressed support for the work of RIMES, APCICT, ADPC and the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre.

84. The delegation of the Russian Federation was of the view that international cooperation played a key role in disaster risk reduction. The delegation expressed strong support for the respective international initiatives, particularly mentioning the IGMASS project. While informing the Committee of national policies on disaster risk reduction, the representative of the Russian Federation mentioned the application of a single unified telephone number (112 system) for receiving all emergency calls, currently being used in pilot zones, which would be rolled out throughout the Russian Federation by 2017. The Committee was informed that the Russian Global Orbital Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS) was freely available to the public in the Asian and Pacific region and that those new technologies could serve the purpose of disaster preparedness and mitigation.

85. The Committee noted the human and institutional capacity-building programmes of APCICT on the use of ICT for socio-economic development, especially through its flagship programme, the Academy of ICT Essentials

for Government Leaders, which had been rolled out in 19 countries of the region. The Committee noted further the APCICT initiative to develop two new training modules under that programme to address the role of ICT for disaster risk management and climate change abatement in accordance with the recommendations of the first session of the Committee, as well as the Centre's efforts to organize regional and subregional training of trainers on the new modules and a collection of case studies for enhanced knowledge sharing.³

86. The representative of Cambodia expressed his gratitude to APCICT for working closely with member States, and conveyed his Government's strong support for the Centre's eight-module training curriculum on ICT for development, which was assisting policymakers in strategic decision-making. He noted the demand-driven process in the development of two new modules of the curriculum relating to the use of ICT for addressing disaster risk management, climate change and sustainable development, and expressed his appreciation to APCICT for having organized a regional training of trainers on the new modules in February 2011, which had included participants from Cambodia. In addition, he noted that his Government planned to use the modules in the future. Other delegations also expressed appreciation for the Centre's efforts in developing the two new modules.

87. The Committee was informed of the opening of the new UN-SPIDER office in Beijing and of upcoming events of relevance. It encouraged member States to use space technology applications for disaster risk reduction.

E. Agenda item 8

Activities conducted as part of the ESCAP cooperative mechanisms on disaster risk reduction

88. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on the work of the Typhoon Committee and the Panel on Tropical Cyclones (E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/5).

89. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Afghanistan; Bangladesh; Republic of Korea; and Thailand.

90. Expressing appreciation for the work of the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee, the representative of the Republic of Korea informed the Committee that his Government had been conducting a project called the "Typhoon Committee Disaster Information System", which was a web-based disaster information system under that Committee's Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction meant to predict typhoon damage on the basis of the projected path of a typhoon and historical damage data using the Geographic Information System.

91. The representative of Thailand informed the Committee that his country was the only member State with membership in both the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones and the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee. He requested that the secretariat continue supporting their activities, especially capacity-building in regard to the Panel on Tropical Cyclones.

³ See E/ESCAP/CDR/9, para. 10.

F. Agenda item 9

Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme

92. The secretariat provided an overview of the strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013 of the subprogramme on information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction, which served as the basis for developing the programme of work for the subprogramme in respect of the same biennium. In responding to a comment by one delegation, the secretariat clarified the cycle for the planning of the strategic framework and programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015.

93. The deliberations and recommendations of the Committee under agenda items 4 through 8 would serve as the basis for the formulation of the strategic framework and programme of work for 2014-2015.

G. Agenda item 10

Consideration of draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its sixty-eighth session

94. The representative of Japan informed the Committee that his Government was planning to sponsor, at the sixty-eighth session of the Commission, a draft resolution provisionally entitled "Asia-Pacific years of action for applications of space technologies and geographic information systems for disaster risk reduction and sustainable development, 2012-2017". The draft resolution would call for enhanced efforts at the national, subregional and regional levels to deepen the contribution of space technologies and geographic information systems for the purpose of addressing disaster risk reduction and management and sustainable development for a five-year period starting on the first day of World Space Week in 2012 (4 October). The Government was planning to make the first draft available at the second session of the Committee on Environment and Development.

H. Agenda item 11

Dates, venue and provisional agenda for the third session of the Committee

95. The secretariat suggested that the third session of the Committee be convened in Bangkok in May or June of 2013. The delegation of Indonesia suggested that the dates of the session be chosen to avoid coinciding with the fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which would likely be scheduled in May or June 2013.

I. Agenda item 12

Other matters

96. The delegation of Indonesia informed the Committee of the upcoming fifth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which was scheduled to be held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from 15 to 19 October 2012, adding that the main theme of the Conference would be "Strengthening local capacity for disaster risk reduction".

III. Organization of the session

A. Opening, duration and organization

97. The Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction held its second session in Bangkok from 29 June to 1 July 2011.

98. The Acting Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP in his welcoming address noted that the Asia-Pacific region had been affected by an increase in extreme weather events and had witnessed unprecedented large-scale disasters which not only caused immediate economic damage and loss of life, but had a lasting impact on human development. He underlined the importance of dedicating more efforts towards integrating disaster risk reduction into development strategies as disasters had widespread repercussions beyond the economies that were directly affected. He reiterated that ESCAP provided a platform for sharing knowledge and promoting capacity-building to deal with the challenges posed by disasters to achieving inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

99. The Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Mr. Suangsam Jamornchan, noted in his inaugural address that the Committee session was timely, as the Asia-Pacific region continued to suffer disproportionately from natural disasters. He added that his own country had recently suffered from severe floods and tropical storms, and urged that the impact of natural disasters upon economic and social development in the region not be overlooked. He welcomed the publication of the informative *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report* and expressed the support of Thailand for the second issue, to be published in 2012.

100. The Chair of the Committee called on Mr. Shoichi Hasegawa, Deputy Director-General for Disaster Management, Cabinet Office of Japan, to make a special presentation on the experience and lessons learned in the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami experienced by Japan on 11 March 2011. In his presentation, the Deputy Director-General informed the Committee that the most devastating impact had been produced by the tsunami, which had resulted in over 23,000 dead and missing people and the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station. Following the disaster, the Government had quickly established an emergency disaster headquarters. Government at all levels, private companies and volunteers in Japan were working for the relief and recovery effort, with support kindly provided by nearly 160 countries and over 40 international organizations. The Government had created new laws and established the Reconstruction Design Council to draw up a blueprint for reconstruction.

B. Attendance

101. The Committee session was attended by representatives of the following members of ESCAP: Afghanistan; Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pakistan; Palau; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; United States of America; and Viet Nam.

102. The session was also attended by representatives of Austria, the Czech Republic, Romania, South Africa and Spain.

103. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies attended: United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Human Settlements Programme; Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; Office for Outer Space Affairs; and United Nations Population Fund.

104. Representatives of the following specialized agencies and related organizations attended: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Universal Postal Union; and World Health Organization.

105. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Asian Development Bank; Association of Southeast Asian Nations; and Mekong River Commission.

106. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Asian Disaster Reduction Center; and International Islamic Relief Organization (Muslim World League).

107. Other entities represented included: Asian Disaster Preparedness Center; Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network; Asian Institute of Technology; Asian Reinsurance Corporation; Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (European Commission); International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; International Committee on the International Global Monitoring Aerospace System Project Implementation; International Organization for Standardization; Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency; Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA) and Remote Sensing Technology Centre of Japan.

108. The total attendance included 70 persons from ESCAP members and associate members and 52 persons from other organizations.

C. Election of officers

109. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chair:	Mr. Sangman Jeong (Republic of Korea)
First Vice-chair:	H.E. Mr. Hassan Ghadami (Islamic Republic of Iran)
Vice-chairs:	Mr. Mohamed Thajudeen (Malaysia) Mr. Loti Yates (Solomon Islands)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Masni Eriza (Indonesia)

D. Agenda

110. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.

4. Recent trends in disasters and their socio-economic and environmental aspects.
5. Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.
6. Enhancing regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific.
7. Mainstreaming innovative information and communications technology in disaster risk reduction.
8. Activities conducted as part of the ESCAP cooperative mechanisms on disaster risk reduction.
9. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme.
10. Consideration of draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its sixty-eighth session.
11. Dates, venue and provisional agenda for the third session of the Committee.
12. Other matters.
13. Adoption of the report.

111. In the panel discussion under agenda item 4, the Committee decided not to include the information documents entitled “Green growth approach: experiences in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation” (E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/INF/6) and “Climate change and disaster risk reduction: the role of trade and investment” (E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/INF/7).

112. The Committee recommended that, in its future work, the secretariat should carefully follow the agreed practice of submission of pre-session documents. Particularly, it stressed the necessity to ensure that documents which circumstantially contained issues for consideration of the Committee be presented in the form of pre-session Committee papers, and translated into all four official languages of ESCAP.

E. Adoption of the report

113. The Committee adopted the present report on 1 July 2011.

Annex

List of documents

Symbol	Title	Agenda item
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/1	Integrating disaster risk reduction into socio-economic development policies in Asia and the Pacific	5
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/2	Enhancing regional cooperation, knowledge and capacity for disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific	6
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/3	ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries	6
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/4	Expanding connectivity to disaster-affected communities through the innovative use of information and communications technology and disaster-related information	7
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/5	Work of the Typhoon Committee and the Panel on Tropical Cyclones	8
<i>Limited series</i>		
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/L.1	Annotated provisional agenda	3
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/L.2	Draft report	
<i>Information series</i>		
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/INF/1 (English only)	Information for participants	
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/INF/2 (English only)	List of participants	
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/INF/3	Tentative programme	
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/INF/4 (English only)	Importance of disaster risk reduction in achieving the Millennium Development Goals	4
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/INF/5 (English only)	Addressing disaster risk reduction and development through improved data on disasters	4
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/INF/6 (English only)	Green growth approach: experiences in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation	
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/INF/7 (English only)	Climate change and disaster risk reduction: the role of trade and investment	
E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/INF/8 (English only)	Achievements and challenges in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action in Asia and the Pacific	5