

**GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**  
Background Note for Invited Speakers to the Session Workshop on  
**“Ecosystems and Environmental Management for Risk Reduction”**

*Wednesday, June 6, 2007*

*9.30-12.30*

*Rooms 7 and 8*

*1. Introduction*

The Hyogo Framework for Action, the Millennium Declaration and the UN Millennium ecosystem Assessment have different points of departure but come to the similar conclusion that environmental degradation, poverty and disaster risk share common causes as well as common consequences for human security and well-being.

They also make clear that ecosystem services, environmental management and environmental information offer opportunities to reduce risk, decrease poverty and achieve sustainable development. These services and skills will be increasingly valuable as vulnerable communities adapt to a changing climate in which more frequent and intense hazards threaten hard won development gains.

In order to support advocacy, capacity-building and training program, and to facilitate the design and implementation of environmentally sound solutions to the challenges posed by natural hazards, there is now an urgent need to effectively communicate the strategic issues linked to addressing the environmental dimensions of disaster risk reduction.

The session workshop will introduce areas of action where disaster and environmental managers have made use of environmental management. The presentations during the are intended to:

- Stimulate a discussion of priorities directions and opportunities for strengthening the role of environment and environmental management in disaster reduction
- Catalyse a statement to the wider ISDR System regarding the importance of establishing an environmental agenda and the need to advance partnerships for addressing environmental dimensions of disaster risk

*2. Status of progress*

Around the world, examples can be found of how indigenous communities, national governments, international organizations have incorporated environment into their risk reduction efforts. Yet, clear guidance on best practice is not readily available. In addition, considerable confusion persists regarding the role of environment in disaster risk.

The ISDR Working Group on Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (EDWG) was established to further the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action’s recommendation on environmental management and disaster risk reduction. The EDWG has produced a guidance paper on issues and opportunities for environmental management in disaster risk reduction. Some of the opportunities identified in the issues paper are:

1. Engage environmental managers in national disaster risk management mechanisms (and disaster managers in environmental management mechanisms).

2. Include risk reduction criteria in environmental regulatory frameworks.
3. Assess environmental change as a parameter of risk.
4. Utilize local knowledge in community-based disaster risk management.
5. Protect and value ecosystem services.
6. Consider environmental technologies and designs for structural defences.
7. Integrate environmental and disaster risk considerations in spatial planning.

### 3. Key points for discussion

- How are the skills, knowledge and capacities of environmental managers utilized in national or sub national disaster reduction initiatives?
- What factors allowed you to succeed in carrying out risk reduction initiatives?
- What challenges were encountered (political, social-cultural, economic) in your efforts to reduce disaster risk. Were you able to overcome these and how?
- What activities/initiatives could be undertaken by the ISDR system to help to overcome identified challenges?
- What are the priority issues that should be addressed in the area of environment and disaster risk reduction by the EDWG within the next year?

### 4. Additional information

The Working Group on Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (EDWG) of the International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ISDR), chaired by the United Nations Environment Programme has prepared an issues paper to collect and communicate key topics, needs, and opportunities. This paper introduces the connections between environment and disaster risk and identifies fields of action where disaster managers can make better use of environmental management to reduce disaster risk.

The paper, titled “Environment and Vulnerability – Emerging Perspectives”, is available at:  
[http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/env\\_vulnerability.pdf](http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/env_vulnerability.pdf)

### Tentative Agenda: Ecosystems and Environment for Disaster Reduction

	Agenda Item	Description of activities	Lead
9:00-9:05	Welcome	Introduces the significance of the issue Introduces session organizers Notes how the outcomes will be reported to plenary	National Chair
9:05-9.15	Overview	UNEP will introduce the session objectives and IUCN will introduce the speakers	UNEP and IUCN
9.15-9.25	Presentations	Disaster Risk criteria in Environmental Impact Assessments – The Jamaican Experience	Mr. Franklin McDonald, <i>Jamaica</i>
9.25-9.35		Role of Environmental Science and Information in Disaster Reduction	Mr. Palle Lindgaard Jørgensen, <i>Denmark</i>
9.45-9.55		Building Institutional Capacity for Disaster Reduction	Ms. Siti Aini Hanum, Indonesia
9.55-10.10	Questions on first three presentations		
10.10-10.20	Presentations	Environment and Climate Change Adaptation in the Andes	Mr. Ricardo Giesecke, Peru
10.20-10.30		Land Use Planning and Disaster Reduction	Mr. Gerald Mango, Tanzania
10.30-10.40		Environmental Options for Coastal Defense	Prof. Hettiarachchi, Sri Lanka
10.40-10.55	Questions on second three presentations		
10.55-12.10	Facilitated Discussion		UNEP and IUCN
12.10-12.15	Synthesis and Summaries	Closing summary	IUCN
12.15-12.20		Closing Summary	UNEP
12.20-12.30		Closing Summary	National Chair