



**Global Platform
for
Disaster Risk
Reduction**

**First session
Geneva, Switzerland
5-7 June 2007**

Chair's Summary

ISDR/GP/2007/6



United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Session documents are available on the Global Platform website
<http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform>

Preface

The first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Geneva, Switzerland, 5-7 June 2007. Participants include representatives of 124 Member States of the United Nations, 20 of whom were of ministerial status, and 105 other regional, inter-governmental and nongovernmental organizations that are actively engaged in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, including the members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction. There were 1150 participants altogether.

The session was convened by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs on the basis of a mandate contained in the resolution of the General Assembly on the ISDR that calls for the adoption by Governments of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the convening of the Global Platform as a successor mechanism to the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction.

The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters was initially adopted by 168 Governments at the World Conference for Disaster Reduction in Kobe (Japan) in January 2005. It seeks to achieve a substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets. It identifies five priorities for action:

1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.
2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.
3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.
4. Reduce the underlying risk factors.
5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

It is foreseen that the Global Platform will become the main global forum for all parties involved in disaster risk reduction, including Governments, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, regional bodies, civil society, the private sector, and the scientific and academic communities to raise awareness on reducing disaster risk, to share experience and to guide the ISDR system.

This first session put particular emphasis on topical issues of concern to policy makers and specific substantive themes, especially those linked to the Hyogo Framework's first priority for action. The urgency for all stakeholders to engage in disaster risk reduction was discussed in plenary on the first day by senior policy-makers, experts and practitioners from three perspectives:

- Reducing disaster risk through the Hyogo Framework for Action as a key strategy for climate change adaptation.
- Challenges in reducing disaster risk in urban settings and mega-cities.
- Roadblocks, costs, and opportunities to implement disaster risk reduction policy.

A series of workshops on the second day provided an opportunity for participants to exchange good practice and lessons learned from their work experience. The plenary on the last day focused on monitoring progress in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework.

This summary provides the Chair's assessment of the key views expressed during the session highlighting the key points and suggestions raised during the event. Participants had an opportunity to comment on a first draft. A full report of the session is being prepared to document the event and its discussions. More information on the event can be found at <http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform>.

Chair's Summary
Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
Geneva, 5-7 June 2007

The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction met in session for the first time in Geneva, 5-7 June 2007 as a global forum of stakeholders concerned with reducing disaster risks, with participants from Governments, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, regional bodies, civil society, the private sector, and the scientific and academic communities. The session's aims were to raise awareness on reducing disaster risk, share experience and learn from good practice, assess progress made in implementing the Hyogo Framework, reiterate commitments to its implementation, and identify actions to accelerate national and local implementation.

This is the Chair's summary of the session, grouped under three broad topics. Participants had an opportunity to comment on a first draft, but it is not a report agreed by the participants and it has no status beyond that of the Chair's own assessment of the key views expressed during the session.

Supporting country efforts

1. Participants expressed considerable concern about the growing risk of disasters, especially in highly vulnerable regions, and about the relatively slow progress being made to address the problem and to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action. We are not on track to achieve the Hyogo Framework's sought-after outcome of a substantial reduction in disaster losses by 2015. The need for action is more urgent than ever.
2. Many countries face a steep learning curve to build their basic institutional capacities, to develop or revise legislation and policy frameworks, to provide budgets, and to implement national platforms and action plans. Other countries, however, have made considerable progress and have a wealth of experience; they are encouraged to help significantly by sharing their knowledge and best practices, particularly on legislation and institution building, and by donating expertise and funds. The ISDR system should support the achievement of a target number of national platforms for disaster risk reduction.
3. Investment in risk reduction needs to be substantially increased. National and local government budgets should adopt targets such as a certain percentage of sector budgets. International funding should be better coordinated and tracked to ensure that development projects do not inadvertently increase risks, as well as to monitor the volume of investment in risk reduction and to measure the performance of investments in reducing risks. Governments and donors should give consideration to establishing funding targets for community-level implementation and special mechanisms to channel funding directly to at-risk poor communities and local authorities. Donors should develop common practices of good donorship for risk reduction, including making long term commitments such as investing target percentages of humanitarian budgets.
4. Countries need to quickly establish systems to monitor and report on their risk profiles and on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework, including best practice codes, verifiable indicators, benchmarks and targets, in order to guide action and improve accountability for results. As one example, some nations have committed to achieving zero mortality in schools by 2015. Stakeholders at regional and international levels should similarly establish systems of accountability for their activities.
5. The private sector should recognise their key role in the creation and reduction of disaster risks, and should be engaged and challenged by Governments and civil society to provide better financial tools to manage disaster risks, and to contribute to risk reduction through participation in public policy debate and in public-private partnerships.

6. Some progress is being made to integrate disaster risk reduction into sustainable development and poverty reduction frameworks and mechanisms and into environmental management tools. This is a long-term task. ISDR system partners should seek innovative ways to increase the involvement and commitment of development and environmental stakeholders, including civil society and community actors. They should also develop practical tools, for example to screen for high-risk factors and to implement multi-hazard approaches.
7. Focus and selection is necessary. International efforts should concentrate on countries that are particularly prone to natural hazards. Mainstreaming efforts should target sectors, communities and groups that are particularly vulnerable, such as infrastructure, health and education sectors, and low-income and other marginal groups.

Programme focus

8. Climate change is likely to increase the frequency or intensity of extreme weather events. ISDR system partners should actively disseminate and apply relevant disaster reduction tools to support adaptation to climate change, with special attention to countries identified to be most vulnerable, and should work closely with climate change policy makers to develop synergies between the Hyogo Framework and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change processes, especially concerning national implementation. They should also encourage NGO and other civil society organisations to link their risk reduction and adaptation activities. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and ISDR system should collaborate on the preparation of a special report on adaptation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development.
9. Many cities and urban areas are crucibles of growing disaster risk, but few have active risk reduction or risk management plans. Half of the world's population live in cities, and many cities are highly vulnerable to earthquakes and storms. Some cities and local authorities have implemented risk reduction programmes, for example for seismic risk assessments and in urban development plans. These need to be documented and widely publicised by the ISDR system. All cities and local authorities should create and implement a disaster risk reduction plan, including multi-sectoral disaster preparedness plans with strong civil society participation.
10. There is a great need for advocacy and education, with clear and consistent messages, to stimulate awareness and active support by political leaders, managers, professional groups, and the general public. Partners in the ISDR system should strengthen their advocacy and educational activities. They should actively contribute to the multi-sectoral implementation of the 2008-2009 ISDR world disaster reduction campaign on safe hospitals that builds on the education and safe schools campaign of 2006-2007. A critical assessment of the economic and social costs and benefits of different risk reduction measures should be undertaken, drawing on ISDR partner networks, in order to provide decision makers with compelling evidence for investing in disaster risk reduction.
11. Women have played important roles in building a culture of disaster prevention, especially at community level, but this is not well recognized and their potential to reduce risks is largely untapped. Moreover, women and girls are disproportionately affected by disasters. ISDR system partners should undertake awareness-raising and action to address gender factors in disaster risk and in particular should actively promote women's participation and leadership in disaster risk reduction.
12. A core challenge in disaster risk reduction is to scale up proven practices, so that they are applied to all vulnerable people and situations, nationwide, and world wide. Governments, donors, technical and professional communities, non-governmental organisations, and grassroots organisations should cooperate to build the new level of systematic approaches that are needed. Regional cooperation and multi-stakeholder voluntary guidelines and codes of practice can play a major role in this task.

13. Scaled-up action needs to be based on a strong foundation of scientific and technical data and knowledge on patterns and trends in hazards and vulnerabilities and a well-tested set of risk reduction methodologies and practical actions. ISDR system partners should collaborate to build these foundations including through research and formal scientific and technical advisory and assessment processes.

ISDR system development

14. The ISDR system should continue to be developed as a multi-stakeholder vehicle for promoting and catalysing widespread engagement and partnerships in disaster risk reduction and for achieving commitment and international coordination and guidance to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action. Some have described it as a global movement. More effort should be made to engage development partners and other key constituencies, such as the private sector, local authorities, and communities.
 15. An important task is to develop the ISDR system's regional mechanisms and thematic capacities to stimulate greater contribution to disaster risk reduction, and to provide better guidance and support for national and local actors. Thematic networks and civil society networks should be encouraged and linked together to achieve rapid global exchange of ideas, viewpoints and good practices.
 16. ISDR system partners need to lead the way by making commitments and by planning and implementing coherent joint activities to support risk reduction by Governments and others. The Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction should be used to support ISDR system joint work. Given the increased recognition of the need for disaster risk reduction by UN Member States, support should be given to the secretariat from the UN regular budget, and not only from extra-budgetary sources.
 17. This first Global Platform has proved to be a valuable mechanism to advance understanding, share experience, assess progress and renew commitments. It should be convened every two years, and should focus on particular themes each session. The next session should formally review progress on addressing the gaps and challenges identified at this Global Platform, including on setting and achieving specific targets.
 18. The Chair and the secretariat will actively follow up on the views expressed at the session through existing mechanisms, including by reporting to the General Assembly and supporting UN Member States as required. They will continue to strengthen the ISDR system, by coordinating further action on the following elements: an advisory mechanism to steer the ISDR system in the next inter-sessional period; the joint planning framework; the scientific and technical advisory mechanism; and the enhancement of regional and thematic processes and mechanisms. The ISDR secretariat will continue its effort to develop and disseminate information and guidance materials requested by Governments and other ISDR system partners.
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