

Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

4 December 2003, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., White House Conference Center, Eisenhower Room

Names of absent members are indicated in italics.

Officers

Helen Wood (NOAA), Chair
John Filson (USGS), Vice-Chair for Science
Margaret Lawless (FEMA), Vice-Chair for Policy

NSTC Liaison

Gene Whitney (OSTP)

Working Group Chairs

International Working Group

Larry Roeder, Jr. (State), Co-Chair
Fernando Echavarria (State), Co-Chair
Larry Weber (NSF), Co-Chair

Earth Observation Task Group

Rosalind Helz (USGS), Chair

Grand Challenges Task Group

Priscilla Nelson (NSF), Co-Chair
Noel Raufaste (NIST), Co-Chair

Remote Sensing Applications Working Group

Rosalind Helz (USGS), Co-Chair
Steve Ambrose (NASA), Co-Chair

Designated Representatives

CDC

Josephine Malilay

DOD

Earnest Paylor

EPA

Peter Jutro

FEMA

Margaret Lawless

FERC

Dan Mahoney

HUD

John Kennedy

NASA

Steve Ambrose

NIST

Shyam Sunder

Noel Raufaste (alternate)

NOAA

Helen Wood

NRO

Keith Fennell

NSF

Priscilla Nelson

OMB

Erin McCartney

Gary Reisner

Jason Freihage

OSTP

Gene Whitney

State

Fernando Echavarria

Larry Roeder, Jr.

USACE

Michael O'Connor

Andy Bruzewicz (alternate)

USCG

Ernesto Montijo

USFS

Susan Conard

US Public Health Office

Eric Noji

USGS

Tim Cohn

Other Attendees

NOAA

Dori Akerman (GRS)

John Gaynor (USWRP)

Nathalie Valette-Silver

NSF

Bob O'Connor

OSTP

Christopher Flaherty

Agenda

10:00 Welcome and Introductions
10:05 Approval of Meeting Minutes
10:10 Report from the Chair
10:25 Report from the OSTP Liaison
10:40 Presentation by the Secretariat of the National Science and Technology Council
11:10 SDR Annual Operating Plan FY2004
11:30 Earth Observation Task Group
11:40 Grand Challenges Task Force
11:50 International Working Group
11:55 Close and Next Actions

Handouts

Agenda
Minutes, November 2003 SDR Meeting
Meeting Notes, Earth Observation Task Group
Meeting Notes, Grand Challenge Task Force
Grand Challenges Task Force Timeline
Sample Grand Challenges
GDIN Conference Agenda
NSTC Structure
EOTG Documents
Outline for the SDR White Paper on Disaster Reduction
All-Hazard Emergency Message Collection System
SDR Annual Operating Plan FY2004

Call to Order

SDR Chair Helen Wood called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and led a round of introductions.

Approval of Minutes

Members approved the November 6, 2003 meeting minutes.

Summary of Discussion

1. Report from the Chair

Helen Wood reported on the upcoming SDR workshop on investment opportunities for research in disaster reduction. The workshop will be coordinated through the SDR Grand Challenges Task Force and will take place sometime next spring. Ms. Wood also provided an update on the work of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), noting the success of the recent GEO meeting in Braveno, Italy and highlighting the opportunities for SDR Earth Observation Task Group to engage with the work of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources (CENR). The next meeting of the GEO is scheduled for April 25, 2004 in Tokyo, Japan, and the final summit will be November, 2004 in Europe.

2. Report from the OSTP Liaison

Gene Whitney returned recently from a meeting of the Western Governors Association (WGA) and described a document authored by the WGA in support of the National Drought Preparedness Act 2003. In the document, the WGA presents drought as one of the most expensive hazards in the United States, while acknowledging that the data required to support the claim are insufficient. Several members requested copies of the WGA document.

Dr. Whitney also announced that the FY2004 SDR membership re-vetting letters will be sent to heads of agencies in the first part of 2004. A copy of the letter also will be shared with the current agency representative.

Actions

- The Secretariat will send a copy of the WGA document to John Gaynor and Rosalind Helz.
- Gene Whitney will send membership re-vetting letters to heads of agencies in the first part of 2004. The Secretariat will send a simultaneous copy to current SDR agency representatives.

3. Presentation by the Secretariat of the National Science and Technology Council

Christopher Flaherty, Secretariat to the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), presented an overview of the NSTC and the related roles and responsibilities of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction. Mr. Flaherty noted that the NSTC has never met, and that the following functions of the NSTC are fulfilled through various committees and subcommittees:

- Coordinate the science and technology (S&T) policy making process;
- Ensure that S&T policy decisions and programs are consistent with the President's goals;
- Help integrate the President's S&T policy agenda across the Federal Government;
- Ensure that S&T are considered in the development and implementation of Federal policies and program; and,
- Further international cooperation in S&T.

Mr. Flaherty emphasized the opportunity available to the Subcommittee to inform the Administration and to influence the budget process. Possible Subcommittee products include, but are not limited to, the following: letters, reports, two-page reports, and executive summaries. Transmission letters also can be an excellent device, especially when communicating with the chairs of the CENR.

Susan Conard suggested that the Subcommittee author a short, articulate summary of the big picture issues and needs, setting priorities within the entire scope of disasters. Complete documentation and back-up information are necessary still, but the primary document will be elegant and accessible. To be timely, such a document would have to be developed by February 2004. Gene Whitney concurred, noting that the Subcommittee also can make a recommendation with regard to a specific hazard or specific hazards. Members agreed that a memo to the CENR co-chairs is appropriate, and that elements of the memo should be used in the memo published each spring by Dr. Marburger, the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Action

- The Secretariat will add an item to the January agenda to discuss the proposed paragraphs for the Dr. Marburger guidance memo. The paragraphs will be supported by two to three pages of prose.

4. Grand Challenges Task Force

Grand Challenges Task Force Co-chair Priscilla Nelson reported on the recent activities of the Task Force, reminding members that the primary responsibility of the Task Force is to report information to the Subcommittee that can in turn be used to advise the White House on investment strategies for the Nation.

Noel Raufaste described the sample Grand Challenges handouts, adding that the Grand Challenge(s) submitted by each agency do not have to be thoroughly identified and formulated. Some of the submissions may simply be prose paragraphs summarizing the challenge and the attendant opportunity. Dr. Nelson and Mr. Raufaste also agreed to review the NSTC committee structure and identify other NSTC subcommittees with which the Task Force should engage. The timeline for the Grand Challenges Task Force is as follows:

Task Force Co-Chair Calls: Solicit agency inputs2003-1219 / Nelson & Raufaste

Deadline: Grand Challenges inputs from agency representatives2004-0109 / All

Task Force Meeting: Discussion of inputs and next actions 2004-0123 / Task Force

Task Force Off-Site: Invent, discuss, and finalize Grand Challenges2004-03 / All

Actions

- Each SDR representative will name a Grand Challenges Task Force representative from his or her agency.
- The Task Force Co-Chairs will call agency representatives to request Grand Challenges submissions by January 9, 2004.
- The Grand Challenges Task Force will meet January 23, 2003 at the National Science Foundation. The Secretariat will distribute a meeting notice.

5. Earth Observation Task Group (EOTG)

Earth Observation Task Group Chair Rosalind Helz reported on the Task Group's success in developing Earth observation requirements relative to disaster reduction. For now, the outputs of this exercise are summarized in a series of tables, but the Task Group also will review the data to verify the capabilities of the observational data for achieving the intended benefit. Ms. Helz stated that the group may revisit the users list and the users needs table; the readiness of an end-to-end system to make use of these observations; and the continuity of the systems.

Action

- Rosalind Helz will e-mail information about the GEO to the Task Group.
- The Secretariat will provide copies of the IW-GEO and GEO organizational structures with names.

6. International Working Group

International Working Group Co-Chair Larry Roeder, Jr. reported on the current activities of the International Working Group, highlighting the group's work in support of the U.S. National Platform for the International Strategy on Disaster Reduction; the group's support of the upcoming Global Disaster Information Network (GDIN) conference (March 25-28, 2004, Washington DC); and the work in support of the January 2005 Yokohama+11 to be held in Kobe, Japan.

Action

- The Secretariat will include time for a discussion of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and GDIN in the January meeting agenda.

7. New Business

Noel Raufaste recommended that members extend the monthly meeting to two-and-a-half hours. Mr. Raufaste proposed two meeting times: 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. or 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Members agreed to consider the proposal.

Action

- The Secretariat will coordinate meeting times with the SDR chair, vice-chairs, and OSTP liaison.

8. Agenda Items and Other Communications with the Subcommittee

Please send proposed agenda items and any other items intended for distribution to the full Subcommittee to Dori Akerman (dori@grs-solutions.com) by December 30, 2003.

9. Contact Information

SDR Leadership

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Margaret Lawless, Vice -Chair for Policy, 202-646-3027, margaret.lawless@dhs.gov

International Working Group

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Earth Observation Task Group

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Grand Challenges Task Group

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Noel Raufaste, Co-Chair, 301-975-6062, noel.raufaste@nist.gov

Secretariat

Dori Akerman, 703-560-7448, dori@grs-solutions.com

10. Future Meetings

The SDR meets on the first or second Thursday of every month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the Eisenhower Room of the White House Conference Center:

2004

February 5, 2004

March 4, 2004

April 1, 2004

May 6, 2004

June 3, 2004

July 8, 2004

August 5, 2005

September 9, 2004

October 7, 2004

November 4, 2004

December 2, 2004

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.