

Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

5 February 2004, 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 (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

Regan Murray (alternate)

FEMA

Margaret Lawless

FERC

Dan Mahoney

HUD

John Kennedy

Kevin Sheehan (alternate)

NASA

Steve Ambrose

Shahid Habib (alternate)

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

USCG

Ernesto Montijo

USFS

Susan Conard

US Public Health Office

Eric Noji

USGS

John Filson

Tim Cohn

Other Attendees

USAID

Peter Morris

Secretariat

Dori Akerman

Agenda

10:00 Welcome and Introductions
10:05 Approval of Meeting Minutes and Report from the Chair
10:10 Report from the OSTP Liaison
10:15 Discussion and Actions Related to SDR Input to Dr. Marburger's Guidance Memo
10:40 Presentation by the Environmental Protection Agency's Representative to the SDR
11:15 International Working Group
11:30 Earth Observation Task Group
11:45 Grand Challenges Task Force
11:55 Close and Next Actions

Handouts

- Agenda
- Meeting Minutes (January 2004)
- International Working Group Meeting Notes
- Earth Observation Task Group Meeting Notes
- Grand Challenges Task Force Meeting Notes
- Grand Challenges Framework Document
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive #7
- Tenth Disasters Roundtable Workshop Agenda

I. Call to Order

SDR Chair Helen Wood called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and led a round of introductions.

II. Approval of Minutes

Members approved the 8 January 2004 meeting minutes.

III. Summary of Discussion

A. Report from the Chair

Helen Wood reported on the recent meeting of the Group on Earth Observation (GEO) in Geneva, Switzerland and announced that participants in the meeting agreed to a new acronym designed to convey the Earth Observation Summit (July 2003) promise that GEO is an effort built on existing systems. The new acronym, Global Environmental Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), also is intended to speak to the interoperability imperative, which includes the critical need for coherent data collection, observations, and attributes.

Ms. Wood discussed the GEO focus on national backbones for critical observations of earthquake, flood, and tornado events, among others. One key component is the consistency of data streams combined with the ability to collect and utilize. Also key is the need for end-to-end backbones. Though the U.S. contribution to GEO is founded on this intent, the U.S. has not yet identified a funding strategy that ensures such a backbone. Of course, the ultimate benefit of GEOSS lies not in identifying new technical requirements, but instead in the momentum to gain government commitment it provides. This is a critical benefit and has never been done before.

Dr. Shahid Habib expressed the concern that developing nations are being left behind by this initiative. Ms. Wood described GEOSS involvement with each of these countries, noting that many developing nations have joined the effort in the past few months, and now are being supported by participation in workshops and other mechanisms. For additional information, visit earthobservations.org.

Actions

- The Secretariat will circulate digital versions of the recent IW-GEO reports and presentations.

B. Report from the OSTP Liaison and SDR Input to Dr. Marburger's Guidance Memo

Every year, the Directors of the White House Offices of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and Management and Budget (OMB) co-author a memorandum for the heads of executive departments and agencies entitled, "Interagency Research and Development Priorities." Last year, the memorandum authored by John Marburger and Mitchell Daniels identified the following five national priorities:

1. Research and development for combating terrorism;
2. Nanotechnology;
3. Networking and information technology research and development;
4. Molecular-level understanding of life processes; and,
5. Environment and energy.

Gene Whitney announced that Dr. Kathie Olsen, OSTP Associate Director for Science, will issue a letter this week requesting inputs from the Subcommittee to the FY2006 memorandum. Once available, the Secretariat will distribute a digital copy of the OSTP request to all members along with

the proposed Subcommittee response and copies of last year's memorandum. Tim Cohn volunteered to draft the Subcommittee's response and the Subcommittee members agreed to convene a special teleconference discussion on 12 February at 1 p.m. ET. Once final, Helen Wood will send the Subcommittee's response to Gene Whitney, who will draft and submit a final response on the Subcommittee's behalf by mid-March.

Discussion of the memorandum focused first on the critical need for research and development at all levels. Tim Cohn reminded members that we do not have a coherent understanding of the cascading effects of any disaster. He also noted that there are tremendous opportunities to create a resilient America in which we experience events without suffering substantial consequences. Priscilla Nelson introduced a risk formula (risk = probability * consequences), noting that we do not know how to handle multi-hazards in this formula or in our other models. She reminded members that we definitely do not know how the consequences interact, especially as they impact communities and the resource base.

Gene Whitney also asked the Subcommittee to consider writing a document specifying the major natural disasters facing the U.S., and highlighting the potential impacts and probabilities of occurrence. His request stemmed from a recent conversation with a senior official who was not aware that Mt. Rainier is still active. Though the volcano is a definite hazard, it is clear that many people are not aware of the risks, and that there are many other hazards for which this also is true.

Dr. Whitney requested a list of potential disasters in the U.S. to include, but not be limited to, the following: a large California earthquake; a grade five hurricane in Texas; Yellowstone eruption; Mt. Rainier eruption; and a New Orleans flood. Such a list must be no longer than five pages and an analysis similar to that found in the Spring 2004 Natural Hazards Observer article by Mark Benthien should accompany each listing. All members expressed great interest in the activity and agreed to the request. Tim Cohn suggested the Subcommittee author an additional paper describing the disasters we can expect in the future and noting the places where the consequences were managed by decisions at the Federal level.

Actions

- Tim Cohn will draft a letter outlining the SDR priorities for research in disaster reduction by February 6, 2004.
- The Secretariat will distribute information about the teleconference on February 12, 2004 at 1 p.m. ET.
- As soon as the OSTP letter is available, the Secretariat will distribute a digital copy of the request along with last year's memorandum and the Subcommittee's draft reply.

C. International Working Group

International Working Group Co-Chairs Larry Roeder, Fernando Echavarria, and Larry Weber were not present; the International Working Group report was postponed until the March meeting. On behalf of the International Working Group Co-Chairs, Dori Akerman initiated brief discussions of the upcoming U.N. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) World Conference on Disaster Reduction and the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC). The World Conference on Disaster Reduction is sponsored by the ISDR and will be held in Kobe, Japan from 18 January through 22 January. The Subcommittee will have some role in the conference, though the specifics still are being resolved. Subcommittee members also were interested in more information about OFAC requirements related to international research and asked the International Working

Group to invite Rick Newcomb of OFAC to the next International Working Group. Information gained from Mr. Newcomb is to be shared at the next meeting of the SDR.

D. Earth Observation Task Group (EOTG)

Earth Observation Task Group Chair Rosalind Helz was not present; the Earth Observation Task Group report was postponed until the March SDR meeting.

E. Grand Challenges Task Force

Grand Challenges Task Force Co-chairs Priscilla Nelson and Noel Raufaste reported on the recent activities of the Task Force, reminding members that the purpose of the Task Force is to identify the ten-year national investment priorities for research and development related to disaster reduction. Gene Whitney amplified their remarks, noting that the identified priorities will become guidance to the White House and ultimately will inform the budget process as well. As a result, involvement from all agencies is critical

Noel Raufaste recounted the discussions in the January 27, 2004 meeting and acknowledged all members for participation in the meeting and for submitting Grand Challenges. Priscilla Nelson also acknowledged the work completed to date, though reminded members that there still is more work to do. She also noted that it would be beneficial to have a national coordination office for the SDR modeled on the organization supporting the Federal Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) effort.

Dori Akerman outlined two intentions for the remainder of the meeting: (1) to identify the categories of national priorities within which the Grand Challenges for disaster reduction will be framed; and, (2) to develop a working list of Grand Challenges. Placing ourselves within the SDR’s mission to create a disaster resistant America, what are the national priorities? Members divided into three teams to answer that question, each beginning from the priorities identified below and then creating a list of national priorities that will live beyond a particular Administration or set of interests.

Presidential Priorities	Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) Priorities	Interagency Working Group on Earth Observations (IW-GEO) Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Winning the war on terror ■ Protecting the Homeland ■ Growing the economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Leadership in science and technology ■ National and homeland security ■ Health and environment ■ Economic prosperity ■ A well-educated populace ■ A vibrant civil society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Better management of resources ■ Security and safety ■ Economic opportunities ■ Better informed decision making

The three groups invented the following lists of National Priorities:

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Leadership in science and technology ■ National and homeland security ■ Health and environment ■ Economic prosperity ■ A well-educated and civil society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A robust and growing economy ■ National and homeland security ■ An informed and educated populace ■ Sustainable [kindler and gentler] society and resources ■ Recognize the interdependence of nations and need for cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Better informed decision making and a well-informed populace ■ Stable and prosperous economy ■ Sustainable and healthy resources and environment ■ Human health and security ■ National resources, security and safety ■ Expanded economic cooperation

Members discussed the three lists, agreeing that a sense of well-being and an appreciation of the natural world and its systems must be represented in the final list. Susan Conard also recommended references to community and resilience.

The next SDR meeting will be held 4 March 2004 and will be a working session designed to elicit an operational list of Grand Challenges. Ms. Wood recommended including Bill Hooke, Bill Anderson, Bob Hamilton, and Tricia Kershaw of the National Academies in the next meeting to identify opportunities for synergy. Priscilla Nelson recommended that the invitation also include someone from Board on Infrastructure and the Constructed Environment so that we continue to bridge the engineering/natural sciences gap.

Actions

- The Secretariat will create a proposed master list of national priorities.
- The Secretariat will procure copies of the National Nanotechnology Initiative report and the various NITRD booklets.
- The Secretariat will synchronize the lists of national priorities and will propose a single, master list.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m. ET.

V. 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 Doris Akerman (dori@grs-solutions.com) by February 25, 2004.

VI. Contact Information

SDR Leadership

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Secretariat

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VII. Future Meetings

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

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

VIII. Summary of Actions

Topic of Discussion	Action	Lead	Date Due
Report from the Chair	Helen Wood will circulate digital versions of the recent IW-GEO reports and presentations.	Helen Wood	4 March 2004
SDR Input to Dr. Marburger's Guidance Memo	Tim Cohn will draft a letter outlining the SDR priorities for research in disaster reduction by February 6, 2004.	Tim Cohn	6 February 2004
SDR Input to Dr. Marburger's Guidance Memo	The Secretariat will distribute information about the teleconference to be held February 12, 2004 at 1 p.m. ET.	Secretariat	9 February 2004
SDR Input to Dr. Marburger's Guidance Memo	All members will participate on the teleconference to be held February 12, 2004 at 1 p.m. ET.	All	12 February 2004
SDR Input to Dr. Marburger's Guidance Memo	As soon as the OSTP letter is available, the Secretariat will distribute a digital copy of the OSTP request; a digital copy of last year's Marburger memo; and the draft reply.	Secretariat	4 March 2004
Grand Challenges	The Secretariat will procure copies of the National Nanotechnology Initiative report and the various NITRD booklets.	Secretariat	4 March 2004
Grand Challenges	The Secretariat will coordinate the lists of national priorities and will propose a single, master list.	Secretariat	4 March 2004
Grand Challenges	The Secretariat will invite Bill Hooke, Bob Hamilton, Bill Anderson, and Tricia Kershaw to the March SDR meeting	Secretariat	9 February 2004