

# Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

14 April 2005, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., White House Conference Center, Truman Room

---

## Officers

Helen Wood (NOAA), Chair  
*David Applegate (USGS), Vice-Chair*

## NSTC Liaison

Gene Whitney (OSTP)

## Working Group Chairs

### International Working Group

Larry Roeder, Jr. (State), Co-Chair  
Fernando Echavarría (State), Co-Chair  
Dennis Wenger (NSF), Co-Chair

### Earth Observation Task Group

Rosalind Helz (USGS), Chair

### Grand Challenges Task Group

Noel Raufaste (NIST), Co-Chair

### Remote Sensing Applications Working Group

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

### WindHRP Task Group

John Gaynor (NOAA), Chair

### Drought Task Group

Pai-Yei Whung (NOAA), Chair

## Designated Representatives

**CDC** Dan Sosin  
**DHS** *Bruce Davis*  
**DHS/FEMA** *Mike Buckley*  
**DOD** *Earnest Paylor*  
**DOE** *Alex de Alvarez*  
**DOI** *Larry Braun*  
**DOI / USGS** *David Applegate*  
**DOT** *K. T. Thirumalai*  
**EOP / OSTP** Gene Whitney

**EPA** Peter Jutro  
**HUD** *John Kennedy*  
**NASA** Steve Ambrose  
**NGA** *Monica Gaughan*  
Michelle Herman  
**NGB** Stephen Davis  
**NIST** *Jim St. Pierre*  
Noel Raufaste  
**NOAA** Helen Wood  
*Margaret Davidson*  
**NSF** Dennis Wenger

**OPHS** *John Babb*  
Boris Lushniak  
**State** Fernando Echavarría &  
Larry Roeder, Jr.  
**USACE** *Michael O'Connor*  
**USAID** *Peter Morris*  
**USDA** *Allen Dedrick*  
**USDA / USFS** Susan Conard  
**USGS** Rosalind Helz

## Other Attendees

**DHS** Chris Doyle  
**DOT** Sheila Duwadi  
**EPA** Steve Clark  
**HUD** Kevin Sheehan

**National Academies**  
Bill Anderson  
Jon Eisenberg  
Ted Schmitt  
**NASA** Shahid Habib

**NOAA** John Gaynor  
Nathalie Valette-Silver  
Pai-Yei Whung  
Doug Harper  
**Secretariat** Dori Akerman  
Will Hottel  
Victoria Jabara

## Agenda

10:00 Welcome and Introductions  
10:05 Approval of March Meeting Minutes  
10:15 Report from the Chair  
10:25 Report from the NSTC Liaison  
10:35 External ISDR Survey  
11:10 Information Technology to Enhance  
Disaster Management  
11:25 International Working Group  
11:35 Earth Observation Task Group  
11:50 Close and Next Actions

## Handouts

- Agenda
- March meeting minutes
- Handout of slides for ISDR Survey Presentation
- Draft of SDR Contributions to the FY2007 OSTP-OMB Memo
- Draft of the Terms of Reference for the External Evaluation of the ISDR
- Draft of the inception report for the External Evaluation of the ISDR
- Text of Congressional Act S.803 to establish e-Gov Initiative
- March IWG Meeting Minutes
- SDR Guidance Paper to Support ISDR
- Draft of Near-Term Opportunity #2: Improved Observations for Disaster Warnings

## **I. Call to Order**

SDR Chair Helen Wood called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

## **II. Approval of Minutes**

Members approved the March meeting minutes.

## **III. Summary of Discussion**

### **A. Report from the Chair**

Helen Wood began by reminding the members that there are a number of National Academies studies in process right now that relate to the work of the SDR. It is important that the Subcommittee emphasize collaboration with the Academies, and support and participate in workshops and studies as appropriate.

Ms. Wood announced that the Grand Challenges Report is nearly completed and has been submitted to Dr. Gene Whitney for final White House clearance. She also announced that a draft version of the Tsunami Lessons Learned white paper will be distributed to members for review. The paper places an emphasis on an all-hazards approach and notes the low probability/high impact nature of tsunamis.

Ms. Wood briefly discussed formation of a new joint task group with the former Interagency Working Group on Earth Observations (now the U.S. Group on Earth Observations (USGEO)) which includes an ad hoc task group for tsunami warnings. That group, co-chaired by Jim Devine and John Jones, began meeting last month and requires additional participation from SDR member agencies. On May 9, the USGEO is hosting a public workshop to discuss the U.S. integrated Earth observation strategy.

Ms. Wood concluded her report by announcing that the SDR submitted a formal contribution to the OSTP-OMB guidance memo.

### **Actions**

- Members will comment on the updated draft of the *Tsunami Lessons Learned* White Paper by April 22nd.

### **B. Report from the NSTC Liaison**

Dr. Gene Whitney began by discussing the ongoing implementation of the Wind Hazards Reduction Program (WindHRP) mandated by Congress in FY2005. OSTP is implementing WindHRP through the SDR, in a Working Group chaired by Dr. John Gaynor. Anyone interested in participating in the WindHRP Working Group may contact Dr. Gaynor for additional information.

Dr. Whitney also announced the formation of a high level interagency task force on integrated national warning systems. Created by the White House at the suggestion of DHS, this task force will include members designated by their heads of agencies.

The Grand Challenges document will be published in the next months, and the next priority will be to identify strategic documents that could be used in agency plans. According to Dr. Pai-Yei Whung, the Drought Preparedness Bill is about to be introduced to the Senate and is a good example.

### **Actions**

- Members who wish to participate in the Wind Hazards Reduction Program Working Group will contact Dori Akerman ([dori@grs-solutions.com](mailto:dori@grs-solutions.com)) by April 20.

- Pai-Yei Whung (NOAA) will send a copy of the Drought Preparedness Bill to the Secretariat for distribution to the members.

### **C. External ISDR Survey Presentation**

Alexandra Galperin, an Independent Consultant to the United Nations, gave a presentation on the external evaluation of the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). An extensive survey is under way to determine the overall effectiveness of the ISDR Secretariat and recommend enhancements consistent with the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and the fundamental goal of reducing disaster losses in member states. Survey methods included consultations and interviews with governments, missions, scientific institutes, United Nations agencies and international and national Non-Governmental Organizations.

Following the presentation, Ms. Galperin answered questions from the members regarding the results of the survey. Mr. Larry Roeder invited all members to attend a more detailed meeting on the ISDR to be held at the State Department immediately following the SDR meeting.

### **D. Information Technology to Enhance Disaster Management.**

Ted Schmitt from the Computer Science and Telecommunications Board of the National Academies led a discussion of the Information Technology for Emergencies and Disaster Management (ITEDM) study. Funded by the FEMA Chief Information Officer at Congressional request, the report intends to identify IT needs in the context of overall interoperability. A workshop will be held in late June to identify current technology and initiatives and to consider future requirements for interoperability.

Ms. Wood and Dr. Whitney agreed that this is an exciting opportunity for the SDR and the Task Force on Effective Warnings. The SDR will make sure that they have this information, though reminded Dr. Schmitt that they may not be ready to draw conclusions at this time.

### **E. International Working Group**

Mr. Larry Roeder introduced Dr. Dennis Wenger as the new co-chair of the International Working Group (IWG), replacing Dr. Larry Weber.

The ISDR sent the IWG a list of possible topics for research and publication, and the working group has produced a draft guidance paper (included in packets). Mr. Roeder requested comments and suggestions from members on the guidance, which is an internal working document only. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Mark Lagon would like to enhance national platforms in partnership with the ISDR. In support of this objective, the State Department intends to host a U.S., Canada and Mexico platform meeting in mid-July which will include the ISDR.

The next IWG meeting is scheduled for April 22<sup>nd</sup> at the National Science Foundation.

### **Actions**

- Members will send edits and comments to Larry Roeder (RoederLA@state.gov) on the draft document *SDR Guidance Paper to Support the International Strategy on Disaster Reduction* by April 20.

### **F. Earth Observations Task Group**

Rosalind Helz led the discussion on the Earth Observation Task Group (EOTG) by drawing attention to the draft document for the May 9-10 USGEO Workshop included in member packets. This document covers the issues and benefits involved with Earth observations, most of which extend far beyond the SDR's disaster reduction areas of focus. The workshop will be open to the public and

will welcome discussion of the nine public benefits and six near-term opportunities that have been identified for Earth observations. All SDR members are welcome to provide feedback to Dr. Helz as soon as possible, to assure inclusion of relevant agency information.

#### **Actions**

- Members will provide edits and comments on the draft of *Near-Term Opportunity #2: Improved Observations for Disaster Warning* (see attached). Send comments to Rosalind Helz ([rhelz@usgs.gov](mailto:rhelz@usgs.gov)) by April 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Secretariat will distribute the announcement of the USGEO Public Workshop on Earth Observations to be held on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### **IV. Adjournment**

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

#### **V. 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:

May 12, 2005 (canceled)

June 2, 2005

July 7, 2005

August 4, 2005

September 8, 2005

October 6, 2005

November 3, 2005

December 1, 2005

#### **VI. 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](mailto:dori@grs-solutions.com)).

#### **VII. Contact Information SDR Leadership**

Helen Wood, Chair, 301-713-1140, [helen.wood@noaa.gov](mailto:helen.wood@noaa.gov)

David Applegate, Vice-Chair, 703-648-6715, [applegate@usgs.gov](mailto:applegate@usgs.gov)

#### **International Working Group**

Larry Roeder, Jr., Co-Chair, 202-647-5070, [roederla@state.gov](mailto:roederla@state.gov)

Fernando Echavarría, Co-Chair, 202-663-2395, [echavarriafr@state.gov](mailto:echavarriafr@state.gov)

Dennis Wenger, Co-Chair, 703-292-7014, [dwenger@nsf.gov](mailto:dwenger@nsf.gov)

#### **Earth Observation Task Group**

Rosalind Helz, Chair, 703-648-6086, [rhelz@usgs.gov](mailto:rhelz@usgs.gov)

#### **Grand Challenges Task Group**

Noel Raufaste, Co-Chair, 301-975-6062, [noel.raufaste@nist.gov](mailto:noel.raufaste@nist.gov)

#### **Drought Task Group**

Pai-Yei Whung, Chair, 301-713-0460 x204, [pai-yei.whung@noaa.gov](mailto:pai-yei.whung@noaa.gov)

## WindHRP Task Group

John Gaynor, Chair, 301-713-0460 x117, john.gaynor@noaa.gov

### Secretariat

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

## VIII. Summary of Actions

### April MEETING ACTIONS

Action	Lead	By When
Secretariat will distribute the announcement of the USGEO Public Workshop on Earth Observations to be held on May 9 <sup>th</sup> .	SDR Secretariat	Complete, see attached.
Secretariat will distribute the letter announcing the formation of the Task Force on Effective Warnings to members.	SDR Secretariat	When cleared by OSTP.
Members who wish to participate in the Wind Hazards Reduction Program Working Group will contact Dori Akerman ( <a href="mailto:dori@grs-solutions.com">dori@grs-solutions.com</a> )	Members	20 April 2005
Pai-Yei Whung (NOAA) will send a copy of the Drought Preparedness Bill to the Secretariat for distribution to the members.	Pai-Yei Whung/Secretariat	20 April 2005
Members will send edits and comments to Larry Roeder ( <a href="mailto:RoederLA@state.gov">RoederLA@state.gov</a> ) on the draft of the <i>SDR Guidance Paper to Support the International Strategy on Disaster Reduction</i> (see attached).	Members	20 April 2005 by 5 pm
Members will provide edits and comments on the draft of <i>Near-Term Opportunity #2: Improved Observations for Disaster Warning</i> (see attached). Send comments to Rosalind Helz ( <a href="mailto:rhelz@usgs.gov">rhelz@usgs.gov</a> ).	Members	20 April 2005 by 5 pm
Members who wish to attend the next meeting of the International Working Group on 22 April at 1 p.m. (National Science Foundation) will contact Dori Akerman ( <a href="mailto:dori@grs-solutions.com">dori@grs-solutions.com</a> ).	Members	21 April 2005
Members will comment on the updated draft of the <i>Tsunami Lessons Learned White Paper</i> .	Members	22 April 2005