

# Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

12 January 2006, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., White House Conference Center, Eisenhower Room

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Italics indicate absent members. "T" indicate members participating via teleconference.

## Officers

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

## NSTC Liaison

Gene Whitney (OSTP)

## Working Group Chairs

### International Working Group

Fernando Echavarria (State), Co-Chair

### Grand Challenges Task Group

Noel Raufaste (NIST), Co-Chair

### Earth Observations Working Group

Steve Ambrose (NASA), Co-Chair  
*Margaret Davidson (NOAA), Co-Chair*  
*Jay Feuquay (USGS), Co-Chair*

### WindHRP Task Group

*John Gaynor (NOAA), Chair*

## Designated Representatives

**BLM** Ed Sheppard  
**CDC** Dan Sosin (T)  
**DHS** Chris Doyle  
**DHS/FEMA** *David Maurstad*  
**DHS/USCG** Suzanne Strohl  
**DOE** Patricia Hoffman  
**DOI** James Tate, Jr.  
**DOT** *K. T. Thirumalai*  
**EOP / OSTP** Gene Whitney  
**EPA** Peter Jutro

**HUD** *David Engel*  
**NASA** Steve Ambrose  
**NGA** *Robert Lohman*  
**NGB** Bill Ryan  
**NIST** *Jim St. Pierre*  
Noel Raufaste  
**NOAA** Helen Wood  
Margaret Davidson (T)  
**NSF** Joy Pausche

**OPHS** *Sven Rodenbeck*  
**State** Ralph Braibanti  
**USACE** *Barbara J. Sotirin*  
**USAID** *Peter Morris*  
**USDA** *Allen Dedrick*  
**USDA / USFS** *Susan Conard*  
**USGS** *David Applegate*

## Other Attendees

**BLM** John R. Haugh  
**DHS/FEMA** Fred Sharrocks  
**EPA** Steve Clark  
**NOAA** John Gaynor  
Margaret McCalla  
Nathalie Valette-Silver

**NGB** Clay McGuyer  
**NSB** Russel Moy  
Mike Crosby  
**NSF** Bob O'Connor  
Jack Mezaros

**Secretariat** Dori Akerman  
Emily Wallace  
**State** Fernando Echavarria  
**USGS** Michael Blanpied  
Rosalind Helz

## Agenda

10:00 Welcome and Introductions  
10:05 Approval of December Meeting Minutes  
10:07 Report from the Chair  
10:25 Report from the NSTC Liaison  
10:45 National Science Board Presentation  
11:00 Discuss Next Steps for Grand Challenges  
11:30 Working Group Reports and Requests  
12:00 Close and Next Actions

## Handouts

- Agenda
- December Meeting Minutes
- SDR Membership List
- *Tsunami Risk Reduction for the United States: A Framework for Action*
- NSTC Press Release – *National and International Tsunami Risks Reduced*
- Washington Post Article – *White House Issues Tsunami Alert Plan*
- *Science and Technology Lessons Learned from the December 26, 2004 Indian Ocean Disaster*
- Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction PowerPoint presentation
- Reducing Disaster Vulnerability Through Science and Technology
- Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction
- Implementing the Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction PowerPoint presentation
- Schedule of Clearance for Grand Challenges Implementation Plans
- U.S. National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
- Disasters Roundtable Workshop announcement
- Accessing the Members-Only section of [www.sdr.gov](http://www.sdr.gov)

## **I. Call to Order**

National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) Liaison Dr. Gene Whitney called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

## **II. Approval of Minutes and Review of Actions**

Members approved the December meeting minutes.

## **III. Summary of Discussion**

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

Dr. Whitney welcomed all new members to the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction (SDR). New members were briefed about the structure, mission and history of the Subcommittee and the *Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction*. The SDR does not micromanage agencies relative to disaster reduction, but instead makes policy and budget recommendations. The SDR recognizes the overlap between natural disasters and terrorism, and tries not to engage on national security issues. Dr. Whitney drew attention to the SDR PowerPoint handouts included in the meeting packets and recommended members visit the SDR website ([www.sdr.gov](http://www.sdr.gov)) for further information.

### **B. Report from the Chair**

Ms. Helen Wood greeted new SDR members and thanked returning members for their continued dedication. Ms. Wood emphasized the essential interagency nature of the SDR and urged members to keep their agencies up-to-date about SDR activities before briefly reviewing SDR meeting procedures for the benefit of new members. She introduced the meeting packets, including the recently issued *Tsunami Risk Reduction for the United States: A Framework for Action*.

Ms. Wood pointed to the Tsunami Lessons Learned white paper as an example of work the SDR is often asked to do. The white paper served as an important framework for the tsunami national plan. All SDR reports and papers are currently posted on the website, and can be made available to members for distribution within their agencies by contacting the Secretariat.

Included in meeting packets was a letter from Ms. Wood to the member agencies asking for financial support for maintaining Secretariat support. The Secretariat is essential for moving SDR activities and actions forward. Any contribution from member agencies would be greatly appreciated.

Ms. Wood discussed the SDR's recent meeting with the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to discuss the Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction Implementation Plans currently in development. The OMB Examiners present at the meeting feel that the Implementation Plans will be useful and look forward to their publication.

The SDR Annual Plan has been completed for 2006 and the Secretariat will transmit it to the NSTC Committee on Environment and Natural Resources (CENR) for approval.

### **C. Briefing and Discussion – National Science Board**

Dr. Mike Crosby of the National Science Board (NSB) began his briefing by explaining that the NSB serves as the oversight body for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and also serves as an independent body of science advisors for the President. The NSB feels there are two important hurricane-related questions that have not been addressed:

1. To what extent does the Nation understand the science and engineering involved in hurricanes, and
2. How can this understanding be improved to reduce hurricane damages and improve warnings?

A public workshop will be held at NSF on January 24, with two follow up events on February 7 and April 18 and the Task Group on Hurricanes will solicit ideas from federal partners, academia and industry about how best to address these issues. The Task Group on Hurricanes expects to produce a report for the President this year. While that report will make some overall recommendations, it will mainly describe the potential role of NSF in moving the Nation forward. This exercise does not pertain to Hurricane Katrina in particular; it is an overall hurricane exercise.

Helen mentioned the possible ties between this exercise and the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Disasters Roundtable on Hurricanes, the results of which are currently available on the Disasters Roundtable website. Dr. Crosby agreed and mentioned that the NSB is always in communication with the NAS. Ms. Wood also mentioned the upcoming WindHRP report from the SDR which will also tie into this exercise.

Dr. Crosby distributed handouts and materials to the members. The Secretariat will provide electronic copies to all SDR members.

#### **D. Clearance Process**

Dr. Whitney reviewed the basic SDR clearance process with the members, emphasizing the importance of participating in all steps of the process, as the first distribution of the document to member agencies may be the only opportunity for agency representatives to comment. It is the representative's responsibility to make sure their agency clears the document technically. The steps to clearance are as follows:

- 1) Participate in drafting the document or provide comments on the document in development
- 2) SDR members approve the document from a technical perspective
- 3) CENR members approve the document from a political/policy perspective
- 4) All White House offices approve the document

It is important that all members thoroughly review documents in Stage 2 as they may not have additional opportunities. Once documents go forward to CENR and the White House, they are essentially "locked" and can no longer be edited by the SDR. This is a very time consuming process and the SDR cannot publish any material without clearance.

#### **IV. Working Group Reports Grand Challenges Task Group.**

Ms. Wood discussed the Grand Challenges process and the ongoing development of the Implementation Plans. A Schedule of Clearances for those documents was distributed and Ms. Wood emphasized that these documents – all 15 of them – must be cleared and published by June.

SDR Members and Agencies who must contribute to individual Implantation Plans are identified in the Clearance Chart. The Secretariat will schedule and facilitate meetings over the next six weeks to gather additional input and ensure overall consistency and excellence of these documents.

Dr. Noel Raufaste, Co-Chair of the Grand Challenges Task Group, suggested new members familiarize themselves with all past publications listed on the SDR website and congratulated the members on the effort they have put into this project.

**WindHRP Working Group.** Mr. John Gaynor, Chair, stated that the WindHRP document has completed the review process and is in OMB clearance awaiting distribution to Congress. It will be made publicly available on the SDR website following transmittal to Congress.

**Earth Observations Working Group.** Mr. Steven Ambrose, Co-Chair, announced that the 24-Hour Waiver Recommendation was completed with great success. NOAA will attend the February meeting to give an update about how the Recommendation was used and their next steps.

The Working Group will hold its next meeting on January 23. The Secretariat will circulate a meeting announcement and agenda prior to the meeting.

Ms. Wood introduced Dr. Rosalind Helz, former Co-Chair of the Earth Observations Task Group. Dr. Helz discussed a series of tables that were generated following the 2003 Earth Observations Summit that state which classes of Earth observations data are needed for disaster reduction. These tables were the “guts” of SDR recommendations to USGEO and the Near Term Opportunities for Disaster Reduction. Dr. Helz has updated these tables and urged the SDR to post them on the SDR website as a technical reference document.

**International Working Group.** Dr. Fernando Echavarría, Co-Chair, reported that the new U.S. National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction had been approved.

The next meeting of the International Working Group has not yet been scheduled.

#### **V. Close and Next Actions**

Ms. Wood reminded the members that the next Disasters Roundtable will be held on March 20 and the next SDR meeting will be held on February 2, 2006.

#### **VI. Adjournment**

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

#### **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:

February 2, 2006	June 8, 2006	October 5, 2006
March 2, 2006	July 13, 2006	November 2, 2006
April 6, 2006	August 3, 2006	December 7, 2006
May 4, 2006	September 14, 2006	

#### **VII. 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).

#### **VIII. Contact Information SDR Leadership**

Helen Wood, Chair, 301-713-1140, helen.wood@noaa.gov  
David Applegate, Vice-Chair, 703-648-6715, applegate@usgs.gov  
Gene Whitney, NSTC Liaison, 202-456-6081, gwhitney@ostp.eop.gov

#### **International Working Group**

Fernando Echavarría, Co-Chair, 202-663-2395, echavarríafr@state.gov

**Earth Observations Working Group**

Steve Ambrose, Co-Chair, 202-358-0851, sambrose@nasa.gov

Jay Feuquay, Co-Chair, 703-648-5057, feuquay@usgs.gov

Margaret Davidson, Chair, 843-740-1220, Margaret.davidson@noaa.gov

**Grand Challenges Task Group**

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

**IX. Summary of Actions****JANAURY MEETING ACTIONS**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>By When</b>
Roz Helz will finalize the Earth observation technical reference document and submit to the Secretariat to initiate clearance.	Roz Helz	Complete
Secretariat will forward the link to the USGEO web site.	Secretariat	Complete
Earth Observation Working Group co-chairs will finalize arrangements for the 1/23 meeting of the working group.	EOWG Co-Chairs	18 January
Secretariat will post the SDR overview slides to the Members Only page of sdr.gov	Secretariat	20 January
Secretariat will check on status of the potential CENR Committee on Risk	Secretariat	20 January
Secretariat will submit the SDR annual report to CENR co-chairs and Secretariat and post to the Members Only page of sdr.gov.	Secretariat	20 January
Secretariat will forward the NSB information on the hurricane study in process.	Secretariat	20 January
Secretariat will post the Tsunami Lessons Learned Document to the SDR Website	Secretariat	20 January