

Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

19 July 2007, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., New Executive Office Building Room 5213

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

Officers

David Applegate (USGS), Chair
Margaret Davidson (NOAA), Vice-Chair (T)

NSTC Liaison

Gene Whitney (OSTP)

Working Group Chairs

International Working Group
Ralph Braibanti (State), Chair

Infrastructure Task Group

Joy Pauschke (NSF), Chair

Earth Observations Working Group

Steve Ambrose (NASA), Co-Chair
Tim Battista (NOAA), Co-Chair
Bruce Quirk (USGS), Co-Chair

Resource Impacts Task Group

Susan Conard (USFS), Chair

Designated Representatives

BLM Ronald Huntsinger
CDC Mark Keim
DHS Bruce Davis
DHS/FEMA David Maurstad
DHS/USCG Suzanne Strohl
DOD Al Johnson
DOE Patricia Hoffman
DOT Sheila Duwadi
EOP / OSTP Gene Whitney

EPA Peter Jutro
HUD David Engel
NASA Steve Ambrose
NGB Daniel Bochicchio
NIH Allen Dearry
NIST Jack Hayes
Noel Raufaste
NOAA Margaret Davidson (T)
NSF Joy Pauschke

OPHS Sven Rodenbeck
State Ralph Braibanti
Fernando Echavarria
USACE Barbara J. Sotirin
USAID Peter Morris
USDA / USFS Susan Conard
USGS David Applegate
Paula Gori

Other Attendees

NASA Shahid Habib
FEMA Mike Buckley
NOAA John Gaynor
Nell Codner
Nathalie Valette-Silver (T)

NSF Bob O'Connor
Secretariat Allison Kilcourse
Emily Wallace
USACE Dimitra Syriopoulou
USGS Jim Devine

Agenda

10:00 Welcome and
Introductions
10:03 Approval of June
Meeting Minutes
10:05 Report from the Chair
10:20 Report from the NSTC
Liaison
10:40 Discuss Climate Change
Liaison
11:00 Presentation-Talking
About Disaster: Guide for
Standard Messaging
11:30 Report from the ISDR
Meeting
11:50 Close and Next Actions

Handouts

- Agenda
- June Meeting Minutes
- Chair's Summary on the Global Platform for Disaster Reduction
- Ambassador Boyce and Governor Apirak Kosayodhin Meeting Notes
- USGEO Ministerial Summit Topics and Early Achievement Nomination Sheet
- Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction Handout
- USGS Landslide Press Release
- Disaster Supplies Kit Handout
- Earthquake Handout
- Guide for Standard Messages Handout

I. Call to Order

Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction (SDR) Chair Dr. David Applegate called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

II. Summary of Discussion

A. Report from the Chair

Dr. Applegate opened the meeting by announcing that Fernando Echavarria (State) is looking for flood experts to assist him; Dr. Shahid Habib (NASA) stated that his agency may be able to contribute.

Dr. Applegate also briefly discussed the Natural Hazards Workshop in Boulder, Colorado that took place 9-12 July 2007.

In addition, the report on “Reducing Loss of Life and Property from Disasters: A Societal Benefit Area of the Strategic Plan for U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System (IEOS)”, is available as a United States Group on Earth Observations (USGEO) open Report and can be found on the SDR website. SDR would like to thank Rosalind Helz (USGS) and John Gaynor (NOAA) for all of their hard work.

B. Report from the NSTC Liaison

Dr. Gene Whitney (OSTP) began by discussing the USGEO current activities. The group has realigned itself to focus on writing and earth observations policy, prioritizing national investment in earth observation, increased outreach activities, and the upcoming Earth Observations Ministerial Summit in Cape Town, South Africa. The Secretariat passed out a document describing U.S. Ministerial Summit Topics and Early Achievements. Dr. Whitney wanted the members to be aware of how USGEO is characterizing their disaster work: earth observations play a critical role in reducing losses from catastrophic natural hazards and promoting reliance when integrated into a durable end-to-end warning and mitigation system providing timely forecasts of impact. The Secretariat then passed out a document describing the U.S. sponsored topic for the Ministerial Summit: Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction. The USGEO will be briefing agencies on their activities and accomplishments for the upcoming Ministerial Summit; they would also like to secure cabinet level support for the event. Dr. Applegate suggested that the Earth Observations Working Group (EOWG) could provide a liaison.

After noting the overlap between SDR and USGEO subcommittees, Dr. Whitney reminded the group to utilize USGEO participants with disaster expertise. John Gaynor (NOAA) noted that the “Reducing Loss of Life and Property from Disasters: A Societal Benefit Area of the Strategic Plan for U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System (IEOS)” Report is also a valuable tool for SDR members seeking disaster information.

Dr. Whitney then went into further detail regarding USGEO’s prioritization of national investment. The group will provide the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) with a list of top priority critical observation types, to be used by the OMB, to help guide national investment in earth observations. John Gaynor noted that the USGEO Report (mentioned above) has some of this information available; the Water Subcommittee has also done research in this area and may prove valuable. Finally, Dr. Applegate noted that the agencies involved need to identify USGEO and SDR members to create the aforementioned list.

C. Discuss Climate Change Liaison

Next, Dr. Whitney reported on the Climate Change liaison; an SDR member could attend the Climate Change Science Program (CCSP) meetings and report back to SDR. In her May presentation, Dr. Mary Glackin (NOAA) identified 7 Synthesis and Assessment Products (SAP) that could benefit from SDR comment; these SAPs will be entering their comment periods in the upcoming months and SDR needs a volunteer point person for each. The SAP's and comment period months are as follows:

1. Weather and Climate Extremes in a Changing Climate (September)
 - John Gaynor (NOAA) and wind and tsunami team members are possible point people
2. Abrupt Climate Change (January)
3. Coastal Elevation and Sea Level Rise (August)
4. Threshold Change and Ecosystems (October)
 - RITG members are prospective point people
5. Water, Biodiversity, and Land Resources
 - RITG members are prospective point people
6. Human Health and Welfare (July)
 - CDC as prospective point people
7. Transportation and Infrastructure (July)

Although each should have a single point person, all SAPs are open to the public for comment and individual SDR members are welcome to comment throughout that process. Nathalie Valette-Silver (NOAA) stated that she will be reviewing all 21 reports for NOAA. Dr. Habib suggested that each point person should create a core group to help examine their SAP; these are synthesis reports and therefore can be very lengthy. It may be wise to enlist help.

Next, Dr. Margaret Davidson (NOAA) discussed her upcoming conference to the Conference of Mayors (September 2007). She said that they requested a list of tools and strategies in disaster mitigation and a “no regret” option for climate adaptation; many of these tools and strategies also make sense for climate change. The Mayors would like to see where these tools and strategies have been used how they performed. The nexus would be to create a manual based on what has worked for CCSP and SDR, for broader use. Dr. Applegate suggested that elements of the Grand Challenges Implementation plans could be pulled together as a starting point.

Dr. Bob O'Connor National Science Foundation (NSF) asked if this was a risk communication strategy. Dr. Applegate answered that it is more about planning and permitting activities but could be broadened appropriately. Dr. O'Connor noted that NSF supports three centers for decision making in uncertainty that may be able to provide valuable information; Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also supports similar centers. In addition, the Department of Energy (DOE) has a new Southeastern research initiative. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will send the Mayor's Conference information on levees. Dr. Bruce Davis (DHS) suggested that Dr. Davidson engage the American Planning Association (APA). Local governments rely on the APA and the Conference of Mayors for information. Dr. Applegate stated that SDR will need people to participate in this effort. Mike Buckley (FEMA) mentioned a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on the insurance industry that recommended FEMA conduct an updated sea level rise study (the previous report was completed 15 years ago).

III. Other Reports

ISDR Global Platform Meeting Report, Jim Devine (USGS)

Mr. Devine (USGS) stated that the summary provided was a good official summary. Unofficially, the meeting consisted of country statements lamenting the increasing severity of disasters and their

lack of funds to mitigate the event or assist people after the event. Much emphasis was placed on implementing the Hyogo Framework and climate change; however, many countries expressed that they were not financially capable of implementing the necessary changes. Between 900 and 1200 people attended the 3 day meeting.

Next, Mr. Devine discussed the GEO Tsunami Working group. The group was formed after the Indian Ocean tsunami to identify Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission (IOC) performance gaps that the international community could fill. Recently, the group met in Paris and began the process of declaring victory and disbanding. Dr. Whitney asked if Mr. Devine saw hope for the future concerning productivity. He answered that the short term seemed bleak but the long term had possibilities such as increased use of standards, better building structures, and a more educated donor community.

IV. Presentations

A. United States Geological Survey, “Talking About Disaster: Guide for Standard Messages”, Paula Gori

Ms. Gori discussed the Coalition of Organizations for Disaster Education (CODE). The coalition created the Guide for Standard Messages to assist those who provide disaster safety information to the general public; it contains awareness and action messages to help reduce the injuries and losses incurred from natural or human-caused disaster. SDR plays an important role in distributing this vital disaster risk and warning information. Ms. Gori stressed the need for consistency and accuracy when talking about disasters. A lack of precision can lead to inaction or improper action, which causes loss of life and property. For more information on the issues discussed in Ms. Gori’s presentation, please see the following: <http://www.redcross.org/disaster/disasterguide> for Talking About Disaster: Guide for Standard Messages.

Ms. Gori distributed a new USGS landslide DVD; more on this DVD can be found at <http://landslides.usgs.gov/learning/movie/>.

Ms. Gori also presented the group with numerous publications distributed to the public by the Red Cross. These publications include posters, flyers, and child-safety books and pamphlets; the Red Cross is trying to reach as wide an audience as possible by also printing many of these items in Spanish.

Meetings are held four times a year at the Red Cross office on 18th St, Washington DC and open to all SDR members. More information can be found online at www.redcross.org.

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

VI. 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 New Executive Office Building (contact the Secretariat to facilitate building entry):

September 6, 2007
October 4, 2007

November 1, 2007
December 6, 2007

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 Emily Wallace (ewallace@grs-solutions.com).

VIII. Contact Information SDR Leadership

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Margaret Davidson, Vice Chair, 843-740-1220, mavidson.davidson@noaa.gov
Gene Whitney, NSTC Liaison, 202-456-6081, gwhitney@ostp.eop.gov

International Working Group

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Earth Observations Working Group

Steve Ambrose, Co-Chair, 202-358-0851, sambrose@nasa.gov
Tim Battista, Co-Chair, 301-713-3028 x171, tim.battista@noaa.gov
Bruce Quirk, Co-Chair, 605-594-6040, quirk@usgs.gov

Secretariat

Emily Wallace, 703-560-7448, ewallace@grs-solutions.com

IX. Summary of July Actions

Action	Lead	By When
Notify Dr. Applegate of your agency’s interest to contribute to the SDR secretariat	SDR Members	Ongoing
Volunteer to participate in the Earth Observations Working Group as a liaison to the U.S. Group on Earth Observations	SDR Members	1 August
Volunteer to comment on the following Climate Change Science Program Synthesis and Assessment Products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weather and Climate Extremes in a Changing Climate (September) ▪ Abrupt Climate Change (January) ▪ Coastal Elevation and Sea Level Rise (August) ▪ Threshold Change and Ecosystems (October) ▪ Water, Biodiversity, and Land Resources ▪ Human Health and Welfare (July) ▪ Transportation and Infrastructure (July) 	SDR Members	1 August
Identify leads for each Climate Change Science Program Synthesis and Assessment Product	SDR Leadership	3 August