

Discussion Draft

Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

2 July 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Department of Commerce, Room 5215

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

Officers

David Applegate (USGS), Chair
Dennis Wenger (NSF), Vice-Chair
Margaret Davidson (NOAA), Vice-Chair

NSTC Liaison

Jonathan Kolak (OSTP)

Designated Representatives

BLM *Edwin Roberson*

Ronald Huntsinger

CDC *Mark Keim*

DHS *Bruce Davis*

DHS/FEMA *Deborah Ingram*

DHS/USCG *Steven Cohen*

DOD *Al Johnson*

DOE *Patricia Hoffman*

DOT *Kelly Leone*

Sheila Duwadi

Tim Schmidt

EOP/OSTP Jonathan Kolak

EDA *Audrey Clarke*

EPA *Peter Jutro*

Stephen Clark

FERC *Berne Mosley*

HUD *David Engel*

NASA *Andrea Donnellan*

NGA *Stephen Homeyer*

NGB *Daniel Bochicchio*

NIH *Allen Dearry (T)*

NIST *William Grosshandler*

Jack Hayes

NOAA John Gaynor

NSF Dennis Wenger

OPHS *Sven Rodenbeck (T)*

State *Cari Enav*

Fernando Echavarria

USACE *Barbara J. Sotirin*

Dimitra Syriopoulou

USAID *Sezin Tokar*

USDA TBD

USFS *Carlos Rodriguez-*

Franco

USGS David Applegate

Paula Gori

Other Attendees

DHS/FEMA Steve Carruth

Candice Abinanti

EPA Janis Johnston

NGA Dana Miller

NGB Lisa Burg

Mark Gaul

David Wilmot

NOAA Nell Codner

Margaret Fowke

Maria Honeycutt

Secretariat Ross Faith

Emily Wallace

USFS Mike Hilbruner

American Meteorological

Society Bill Hooke

Wendy Thomas

National Academies

Lauren A. Augustine

Bill Ostendorff

Agenda

- 10:00 Welcome and Introductions
- 10:05 Approval of June Meeting Minutes
- 10:10 Report on the UNISDR Global Platform
- 10:20 Report from the Chair
- 10:30 Report from the Vice-Chairs
- 10:40 Report from the NSTC Liaison
- 10:50 DHS Risk Assessment for Quadrennial Review
- 10:55 Presentation: DR-COSEPUP Disasters Resilience Study
- 11:25 Presentation: Outcomes from AMS Forum "Rising Above the Weather"
- 11:55 Close and Next Actions

Handouts

- Agenda
- June Meeting Minutes
- Call for Authors and Review Editors for IPCC Special Report
- Opportunity to Contribute to Encyclopedia of Natural Hazards
- Draft Coastal Working Group TOR
- DR-COSEPUP Project Summary

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I. Call to Order and Introductions

Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction (SDR) Chair David Applegate (USGS) called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and the participants introduced themselves.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The June Meeting Minutes were approved with no opposition or abstentions.

III. Report from the UNISDR Global Platform

The UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction took place from June 16-19, 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland. The conference attracted over 2400 participants from 169 countries, non-government organizations (NGOs) and other organizations. Chaired by UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes, the assembly was attended by several heads of state, other high level officials, and featured opening remarks from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The central theme of the Second Session was the link between poverty and vulnerability to hazards. This theme also had been captured in the UN “Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction,” which was launched earlier this spring and can be found online at <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/>. The Chair’s Summary of the Global Platform’s Second Session is available at <http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/2009/background/documents/GP09-Chair's-Summary.pdf>.

In his capacity as Chair of the National Science and Technology Council’s Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction, which serves as the U.S. National Platform for ISDR, Applegate led the U.S. delegation, which included the following members:

Mark Keim (CDC)
Mollie Mahany (CDC)
David Passey (FEMA detailed to State)
Paul Scholz (NOAA)
Dennis Wenger (NSF)
Lisa Brodey (State)
Cari Enav (State)
Nance Kylvoh (State)
Peter Morris (USAID)

Applegate noted that several of the NGOs which attended the conference were U.S.-based and internationally-focused, a characteristic often referred to as “outward-facing” in NGO parlance. These organizations were particularly pleased that the Federal government had sent a robust delegation. During the conference 240 sets of the *Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction and Implementation Plans* were distributed.

As a result of the U.S. delegation’s strong presence and engagement, the NGO InterAction invited Applegate to speak at its 2009 Forum: "The Next 25 Years Start Today" (July 6-9 in Arlington, VA). InterAction is the largest coalition of U.S.-based, international NGOs focused on the world’s poor and most vulnerable people. More information about the coalition and forum is available through www.interaction.org.

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Applegate reported that during the conference Assistant Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction Margareta Wahlström drew links between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. The recognition of this linkage is expected to be a major UN focus as it drives toward the upcoming Copenhagen Climate Change Meeting, scheduled for December 7-18, 2009. More information on the meeting is available through <http://en.cop15.dk/>.

Dennis Wenger (NSF) stated that he was pleasantly surprised at the platforms' productivity and encouraged by the progress that had been made in implementing the Hyogo Framework since its adoption at Kobe in 2005. He also was impressed with the capacity building initiatives of the ISDR system. He noted that Wahlström, who was appointed to the post of Assistant Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction in November 2008, seemed to have really taken the reigns of the organization. The ISDR also may transform its Science Advisory Committee (SAC) into something other than a purely advisory body.

The State Department is reviewing the ISDR Secretariat's request for a resumption of funding, which State suspended in 2005. USAID/OFDA is considering providing matching funds.

During the Second Session the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) released its "World Disasters Report 2009 - Focus on early warning, early action." The report can be accessed through <http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/wdr2009/index.asp>.

Bill Hooke from the American Meteorological Society took the opportunity to inform SDR Members that the International Council for Science (ICSU) had launched a major new research program to address the challenge of natural and human-induced environmental hazards. The Integrated Research on Disaster Risk Program is designed as a 10 year endeavor. More information about the program can be found at http://www.icsu.org/1_icsuinscience/ENVI_Hazards_1.html.

IV. Report from the Chair

Applegate reported that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently sent out a call for authors and review editors to contribute to its upcoming Special Report "Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation." The U.S. Global Change Research Program will coordinate the nomination process for U.S. experts. Those interested in taking part in the report should email the USGCRP directly (ipcc_nominations@usgcrp.gov) by Friday, July 10th. Applegate was pleased to also report that the USGCRP had expressed interest in leveraging SDR expertise in the formation of the ad-hoc body that will select U.S. experts for participation in the IPCC report. Those who wish to serve on the selection board should email the SDR Secretariat (rfaith@grs-solutions.com) by Friday, July 10th. The selection board is expected to meet to make its decisions on Wednesday, July 15th.

Paula Gori (USGS) stated that the USGS was currently working to come up with an individual to serve as a writer or editor for the report.

The SDR leadership is currently exploring ways to strengthen SDR's interaction within the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources (CENR) on issues related to climate change adaptation. Applegate stated that an opportunity may be emerging for the SDR to dovetail the *Grand Challenges* with climate change adaptation strategies.

Jon Kolak (OSTP) stated that OSTP recognizes the potential for the SDR to play a valuable broader role by contributing disaster reduction strategies within the climate change paradigm. At the January SDR meeting, Members were provided a draft document outlining an opportunity for the SDR,

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USGCRP, and the U.S. Group on Earth Observations (USGEO) to collaborate and create synergies. Kolak referenced this document as a good starting point for the initiative, adding that it will need to be fleshed out as the CENR undergoes an official review process. Pinning down the best way for the SDR to contribute, inform discussions, etc. is currently the central question. The *Grand Challenges* constitute a visible, well-vetted starting point for developing the SDR's contribution. Kolak noted that an introspective look at the *Grand Challenges* and implementation plans would be helpful to assess how current efforts at the National and regional level will need to shift with climate change factored in.

Applegate reiterated a sense of real opportunity for the SDR to become engaged in this effort and stated that the SDR leadership would attempt to define the parameters of this project more fully before the September meeting.

The publisher Springer Verlag is presently embarking on the creation of an Encyclopedia of Natural Hazards. SDR Members who are interested in contributing to the encyclopedia are invited to contact Peter Bobrowsky (pbobrows@nrcan.gc.ca) for more information.

V. Report from the Vice-Chairs

Vice-Chair Dennis Wenger (NSF) stated that he did not have anything to add to his earlier remarks.

VI. Report from the NSTC Liaison

NSTC Liaison Jon Kolak (OSTP) began his report by noting that the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) is still reviewing the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program (NWIRP) Biennial Progress Report for Fiscal Years 2007 and 2008. OSTP has asked for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to review the document and has received no negative reaction so far. Kolak noted that a comment on the report by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) still needs to be resolved.

Maria Honeycutt (NOAA) commented that resolving it would be easy and looked forward to contacting Kolak to take care of the matter soon.

Kolak stated that he continues to push for clearance of the Space Weather Implementation Plan. Consideration of the document will likely remain on hold until the NSTC review process is completed and in lieu of fully repopulating the CENR, an analogous, interim clearance process is identified and implemented.

Applegate mentioned that in the June 2009 issue of *Science* was an article on space weather forecasting which summarizes the commonly held opinion among space physicists that we are not ready for the next solar maximum. A subscription is required to read the online article "Space Weather Forecasting: Are We Ready for the Next Solar Maximum? No Way, Say Scientists." An abstract of the article is available at <http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/short/324/5935/1640>.

The SDR ad hoc Coastal Group met on June 19th to further develop a Terms-of-Reference (TOR) for the group. Based on this discussion, a second draft of the document was produced and provided to SDR Members in their July meeting folders. Kolak noted that the TOR still needs a little more fleshing out from the OSTP perspective but provides a good conceptual foundation in its current form.

Bill Grosshandler (NIST) asked if there was currently an interim Chair of the group.

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Applegate responded that the SDR leadership had been shepherding the group through its formative meetings. Moving forward, the formal Co-Chairs will be selected once the TOR is finalized.

VII. DHS Risk Assessment for Quadrennial Review

Steve Carruth (FEMA) announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is gearing up to conduct a risk assessment as part of its quadrennial review. This all-hazards risk assessment will be conducted through a National lens and is intended to inform prioritization of programs and policies within the agency. In this effort, FEMA will be reaching out to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), USGS, NOAA, and NGO stakeholders.

VIII. Presentation: DR-COSEPUP Disasters Resilience Study

Applegate introduced Lauren Alexander Augustine and Bill Ostendorff from the National Academies. Augustine, who is Director of the National Academies Disasters Roundtable, previously briefed the SDR on March 3rd about the National Academies Disasters Roundtable workshop on cascading disasters, which was held on February 26th in Irvine, California. Applegate stated that he was pleased to welcome Lauren back and to have Bill at the meeting. Bill Ostendorff is Director of the National Academies Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy (COSEPUP).

Augustine thanked Applegate and Members for the opportunity to revisit the SDR. Turning to the day's topic, Augustine filled in some background about the genesis of the proposed joint study between the Disasters Roundtable and COSEPUP. She stated that she was approached at a high level in the Academies in March to begin a scoping exercise for a joint study on disaster resilience.

Ostendorff stated that the mission of COSEPUP is to study science and technology issues for the White House, OSTP, Congress, the National Science Foundation, and other government agencies. COSEPUP is a cross-cutting body which stands up ad hoc committees to study particular and pressing issues in depth. Studies conducted by COSEPUP often change the policy direction of the U.S. government. Ostendorff commented that COSEPUP views the sobering realities of disasters in the Nation as a big problem which needs to be addressed. This realization is underpins the justification for the proposed joint study.

Augustine referenced a summary of the proposed study, which was provided to SDR Members in their meeting folders. The ad hoc committee that will undertake the study is expected to hold its first meeting by the end of 2009. The cost for the study is projected to be approximately \$1 million and the National Academies will need about half that amount in advance to begin work. The study is intended to provide structure and vocabulary for a National resilience plan and is likely to be the first in a series of reports that establish goals for disaster reduction. These reports will look for overlaps and disconnects in the Federal effort and are expected to be tractable and penetrable.

Augustine stated that on behalf of the National Academies, she is looking for the SDR's feedback, buy in, interest, and possibly financial support. Funds have been committed by the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate and FEMA. She welcomed contributions from agencies in the form of in-kind support, experts "loaned" to the ad hoc committee, and individuals to review the study. Ralph Cicerone, President of the National Academy of Sciences and Chair of the National Research Council Governing Board, is ultimately responsible for vetting the experts who will serve on the ad hoc committee. Nevertheless, Augustine stated that the Disasters Roundtable and COSEPUP are open to input from a variety of sources.

Hooke stated that there is a real deficit in the way the National is addressing disaster risk and added that the U.S. is, frankly, flunking the test. He argued that as society introduces and becomes ever-

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more dependent on new infrastructure, new vulnerabilities emerge, and the Nation has not taken the necessary steps to mitigate these novel risks. As a result of new phenomenon such as “just in time delivery” supply chains, which now pervade the Nation’s economy, disaster response has become much more complicated. Hooke forewarned that a sobering set of disaster scenarios now awaits communities across the country owing to our reticence for action and mitigation. He also reinforced the notion that this project was not just “some other” study, but that COSEPUP reports wield the power and influence to change the direction of the government.

Grosshandler thought it would be beneficial for Augustine and Ostendorff to come in person to the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) in order to drum up support within the agency and extended Augustine and Ostendorff an invitation to do so.

Paula Gori (USGS) stated that some Federal agencies, including the USGS, have already conducted research on the topic of resilience and encouraged COSEPUP to survey agencies about their efforts in this area up front in order to create buy in.

Wenger noted that the National Science Foundation had also conducted similar research of its own. He recommended that Augustine and Ostendorff prepare and send agencies a brief questionnaire to get a sense of the breadth and depth of these research activities.

Applegate commented that the joint study was an exciting development since COSEPUP wields a rather “big stick” on such issues. Otherwise stated, COSEPUP is a kind of bully pulpit for reform. He thought this effort would enable action by others in the Federal government and give subsequent work in disaster reduction “legs.”

Carruth recommended fleshing out a definition for the term “response” in the Disasters Roundtable/COSEPUP study proposal (“Scope of the Study” section; second bullet). He thought that the context within which the word was used left unclear whether it referred to the built environment or referenced a socio-political dimension.

Augustine welcomed Carruth’s comment and encouraged feedback from other SDR members going forward. She thought this particular case might be the result of imprecise editing and stated that she would give it a closer look.

Grosshandler recommended a one-day workshop for COSEPUP, the Disasters Roundtable, SDR Members, and others to exchange expertise and enhance the framework of the study.

SDR Members are invited to send comments on the Disasters Roundtable-COSEPUP study proposal Lauren Alexander Augustine (LAugustine@nas.edu) along with expressions of agency interest to contribute to the study through in-kind and financial support.

Applegate thanked Augustine and Ostendorff for presenting this important project to the SDR at its embryonic stage and looked forward to the fruits it will likely bare.

IX. Presentation: Outcomes from AMS Forum “Rising Above the Weather”

Wendy Thomas from the American Meteorological Society’s (AMS) Policy Program thanked Members for the opportunity to speak before them on the topic of hospital vulnerability. AMS hosts an annual policy study series that provides a forum for connecting agencies and disciplines to work together in the protection of national hospital infrastructure. “Rising Above the Weather” was one such forum. From April 2-3, 2009 in Washington, DC, over 50 experts from architecture,

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engineering, healthcare, insurance, law, meteorology, planning, and public health convened to discuss and better understand why hospitals remain so vulnerable to storm damage and to discover the products and services that are offered through the agencies and disciplines that can foster a culture of hospital resilience. Presentations delivered at the forum can be accessed at <http://www.ametsoc.org/atmospolicy/RisingAbovetheweather.htm>.

In a blanket statement, Thomas summarized that a lack of environmental risk awareness and insufficient funding are two key drivers of the year-in-year-out vulnerability of hospitals and other healthcare facilities in the Nation. Floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, and severe thunderstorms have caused between \$60-\$600 million in structural damage to hospitals per facility over the last four years. Hospitals are critical elements to essential public health functions. They are employment centers for urban and rural communities alike, as well as centers for major economic supply chains of other products and services (including pharmaceuticals, linens, sanitation, and food/water). All-totaled, hospitals account for 16 percent of the Nation's GDP, and their closure due to hazard damage causes adverse socio-economic effects to ripple throughout the communities they serve. Yet modifying these buildings to protect them against the most common vulnerabilities (namely to electrical systems) would cost on average only \$3 million per facility.

Thomas also stated that there is a need to coordinate the products and services of the Federal government to address this particular problem. Reiterating a conclusion reached at the April AMS forum, she encouraged the government to explore public-private partnership opportunities, especially in the realm of insurance. Two insurance companies actually offer hospitals lower premiums in exchange for hazard mitigation building modifications. Yet, the upfront costs of these modifications are often too high for hospitals. Government grants could underwrite these costs. Thomas stressed that this federal investment has the potential to promote a change in mindset with regard to mitigation, to reduce financial burdens on economically strained healthcare facilities, to create resilient hospitals, and to strengthen public-private partnerships.

John Gaynor (NOAA) recognized his NOAA colleague Margaret Fowke (NWS) as a critical point of contact between the government and other stakeholders in the hospital community. He also stated that the issue was a serious problem and expressed frustration that good forecasts, resources and other tools made available by the National Weather Service are often not used by the hospitals community.

Gori asked how hospital building codes fit into the picture and wondered whether the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was still a leader in the field.

Thomas explained that building codes are indeed an important part of the equation, but they vary from state to state. She noted that the VA is very active in mitigating earthquake risk to its hospital facilities but did not participate in the April AMS forum and has not been pro-active in reducing weather-related vulnerability.

Maria Honeycutt (NOAA) also pointed out that while the factors of building location and structure are indeed important, issues of where equipment and files are placed within hospitals can also affect their resilience.

Emily Wallace (Secretariat) asked if there had been any efforts to reach out to Congress and dovetail this issue with the current healthcare conversations.

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Hooke stated that the conversations on the Hill are really about “fair-weather” healthcare. Few representatives are interested in disaster mitigation and there is a clear need to raise awareness of this serious vulnerability in the healthcare system of the Nation.

Thomas thanked members for the opportunity to present on this important issue.

X. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

XI. Future Meetings

The SDR meets on the first or second Thursday of every month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

September 3, 2009
October 1, 2009

November 5, 2009
December 3, 2009

* **There will be no
August meeting.**

X. 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).

XI. Contact Information SDR Leadership

David Applegate, Chair, 703-648-6714, applegate@usgs.gov

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

Dennis Wenger, Vice Chair, 703-292-8606, dwenger@nsf.gov

Jon Kolak, NSTC Liaison, 202-456-6081, jkolak@ostp.eop.gov

Secretariat

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

XII. Summary of July Actions

Action	Lead	By When
Send comments on the Coastal Group TOR to the Secretariat (rfaith@grs-solutions.com).	SDR Members	Friday, July 17 th
Send comments on the Disasters Roundtable-COSEPUP study summary (attached) to Lauren Alexander Augustine (LAugustine@nas.edu) along with expressions of agency interest.	SDR Members	ASAP
Send nominations of U.S. experts (Authors and Review Editors) to assist with the IPCC Special Report "Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation" to ipcc_nominations@usgcrp.gov .	SDR Members	Friday, July 10 th
Send nominations to serve on the U.S. expert-selection board to Ross rfaith@grs-solutions.com .	SDR Members	Friday, July 10 th
Contact Peter Bobrowsky (pbobrows@nrcan.gc.ca) if you are interested in contributing to Springer Verlag's Encyclopedia of Natural Hazards.	SDR Members	Standing
Contact Emily (ewallace@grs-solutions.com) to receive copies of the Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction Implementation Plan packets or CD.	SDR Members	Standing
Let Emily or Dave know how you use the implementation plans, including when you link to	SDR Members	Standing

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the plans from your agency websites.		
Send Emily or Dave additional distribution suggestions, including relevant contact information.	SDR Members	Standing