

# Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

3 February 2011, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., White House Conference Center Lincoln Room

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

## Officers

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

## NSTC Liaison

Tamara Dickinson (OSTP)

## Designated Representatives

**BLM** *Edwin Roberson*

*Daniel Lechefsky*

**CDC** *Mark Keim*

**DHS** Bruce Davis

**DHS/FEMA** Stephen Carruth (T)

**DHS/USCG** *Austin Gould*

**DOD** Al Johnson

**DOE** *Patricia Hoffman*

**DOT** *Kelly Leone*

*Sheila Duwadi*

**EOP/OSTP** Tamara Dickinson

**EDA** *Audrey Clarke*

**EPA** Peter Jutro

Stephen Clark

**FERC** *Pamela Romano*

**HUD** *David Engel*

**NASA** Craig Dobson

**NGA** *Chris Crosiar*

**NGB** *Daniel Bochicchio*

**NIH** *Allen Dearry*

**NIST** *William Grosshandler*

**NOAA** *Margaret Davidson*

*John Cortinas*

**NSF** Dennis Wenger

**OPHS** Sven Rodenbeck (T)

**State** Nicholas Suntzeff

Brian Lieke

**USACE** *Steven Cary*

Dimitra Syriopoulou

**USAID** Sezin Tokar

**USDA** *TBD*

**USFS** *Carlos Rodriguez-*

*Franco*

**USGS** Paula Gori (T)

## Other Attendees

**BLM** William Ypsilantis

**EPA** Alona Bachi

Brendan Doyle

Marcy Rockman (AAAS)

Ed Washburn

**FERC** Frank Calcagno (T)

Justin Smith (T)

**NASA** Michael Goodman (T)

Dalia Kirschbaum

**NOAA** Nell Codner

Maria Honeycutt (T)

Margaret McCalla

**NSF** Gregory Anderson

**OSTP/EOP** Shere Abbott

**Secretariat** Ross Faith

Barbara Haines-Parmele

## Agenda

- 10:00 Welcome and Introductions
- 10:05 CENRS Sustainability Focus & Other OSTP Priorities
- 10:40 Approval of January Meeting Minutes
- 10:45 Report from the Chair
- 10:50 Report from the Vice-Chairs
- 10:55 Report from the NSTC Liaison
- 11:00 UN/ISDR: Upcoming Meetings & Other Activities
- 11:05 U.S. Disaster Risk Reduction Assistance for Nepal
- 11:10 National Level Exercise 2011
- 11:55 Close and Next Actions

## Handouts

- Agenda
- Draft January Meeting Minutes
- Announcement of NRC Report Briefing: "Building Community Disaster Resilience through Private-Public Collaboration"
- ISDR Global Platform meeting announcement
- ISDR Regional Platform meeting announcement
- USGS Fact Sheet: New Madrid Seismic Earthquake Hazard

## **I. Call to Order and Introductions**

Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction (SDR) Chair David Applegate (USGS) called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. and the participants introduced themselves.

## **II. CENRS Sustainability Focus and Other OSTP Priorities**

Applegate introduced Shere Abbott, the Associate Director for Environment of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) in the Executive Office of the President. Abbott manages a portfolio of science and technology policy that ranges from energy and climate change to environmental quality and sustainability.

Abbott began her presentation by conveying the President's strong interest in placing science and innovation at the center of public policy decision-making. While not all decisions of the Administration will be made only on the basis of scientific knowledge, the President's charge is to use the best that science has to offer to inform decisions. Since many present and emerging societal challenges will compel policy decisions on issues that increasingly straddle concerns of environmental quality, natural resource use, and economic wellbeing, successfully meeting these challenges through the application of leading science will require a more integrated approach across the scientific disciplines and federal agencies. Additionally, to reduce instances in which lack of scientific knowledge raises barriers to making informed decisions, innovation must be promoted, adopted, and integrated into the decision-making framework.

John Holdren, Director of OSTP and the President's Science Advisor, is focused on promoting the evolution of the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) into a structure that is more relevant, better able to meet current and future challenges, and aligned with the President's priorities. From an administrative standpoint, this means executing improved coordination of budgets, activities, initiatives, and priorities across the agencies to ensure that all of these elements are coherent, consistent, and integrated. Ultimately, the whole of the federal science and technology enterprise must be greater than the sum of its parts, and the NSTC structure should facilitate development of the S&T agenda toward that end. Most relevant to the SDR is the addition of a sustainability focus to the subcommittee's parent body, now the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Sustainability (CENRS). The goal of sustainability, explained Abbott, entails patterns of development which promote human well-being and preserve the life support systems of the planet; the federal government should be working towards an integrated S&T agenda that promotes human well-being and development *and* protects the environment.

Another important change made by the Administration has been the realignment of OSTP's energy portfolio. Traditionally OSTP's Technology Division has taken the responsibility for energy issues, and although different aspects of energy policy are now dealt with across the various divisions of OSTP in an integrated way, the energy portfolio has been primarily paired with the environment portfolio. This pairing has been formalized in the creation of OSTP's Environment and Energy Division, which Abbott oversees, though she still retains the narrower title of Associate Director for Environment as a reflection of her core expertise. The realignment recognizes the increasingly important ties between energy, natural resources, and the environment when dealing with pressing issues of the day, such as bio-fuels, land use, and water availability.

Abbott stated her view that the SDR was well-positioned to help advance the Administration's agenda for science, technology, and innovation and also to lend practical experience in the field of disaster reduction. She emphasized that the prevailing goal and challenge for experts in the field was in making the shift from simply understanding the natural processes that cause hazards to understanding how to prepare human societies so hazard impacts can be mitigated and losses reduced.

For the CENRS subcommittees that do not efficiently blend science, research, and practical application, the goal in most cases, Abbott stressed, is not to radically overhaul these bodies—which would be rather unproductive—but to encourage their adoption of a more end-to-end approach. Abbott specified the Subcommittee on Global Change Research and its complementary U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) as a case in point. USGCRP’s traditional focus has been on understanding the science and impacts of climate change. In step with the new end-to-end approach as well as the recommendations of the National Academies, the goal for USGCRP is now to extend its expertise into the more practical areas of climate change adaptation and mitigation. Ultimately, the new CENRS structure should break down silos, promote the flow of relevant information, and provide the “glue” for decision-making that needs input and support from multiple fields of expertise, such as climate science, disaster reduction, ocean science, Arctic research, and social science.

Applegate informed the subcommittee members present that he had the opportunity on behalf of the SDR to present at the February 1st CENRS meeting on some of the links between disaster reduction and ocean issues, calling out in particular the work of the SDR’s nascent Coastal Inundation Working Group as well as opportunities to link this group with others in a cross-cutting manner. The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has expressed interest in partnering to advance climate change adaptation. Also, the Subcommittee on Global Change Research now includes the newly-created position of Vice Chair for Adaptation Science, signaling another possible channel for collaboration. Applegate stated that he looked forward to pursuing a joint adaptation agenda linking the SDR with these bodies.

Abbott recapped how the Administration had been working to advance climate adaptation over the past two years. As the current Administration took over, there was a concerted effort to preserve corporate memory from past work in this realm and avoid duplicated effort, but also to refocus discussion on what science was needed to bolster adaptation capacities and better inform adaptation policy-making. The Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force was formed to provide an opportunity for an extended, year-long dialogue on the issue from a policy perspective, and during that time the USGCRP’s work on adaptation, which had traditionally focused on the issue from the standpoint of pure science, was suspended. Since the release of the task force’s report in October, 2010, the adaptation science portfolio has been reintegrated into USGCRP with the added benefit of this new policy perspective.

Peter Jutro (EPA) summarized the difficulty of impressing upon decision-makers, both in the executive and legislative branches, the importance of investing in both disaster prevention and recovery. He noted that growing recognition of the need to invest in recovery and resilience has unfortunately emboldened some decision-makers to question the need to invest in prevention. On a related issue, Jutro stated that when the Subcommittee on Natural Disaster Reduction was renamed in 2002, dropping the term “natural”, the SDR’s portfolio expanded to include man-made, technological disasters, which reflected a growing understanding within the government that natural and “right of boom” disasters were incredibly similar in terms of dealing to their consequences. In light of these similarities, Jutro recommended that OSTP consider linking—even informally—the CENRS with the NSTC Committee on Homeland and National Security on disaster response issues that cut across the two bodies.

Abbott stated that Jutro’s points were well taken. Early on in dealing with climate change adaptation, there was concern that efforts to advance adaptation would detract from the urgency of the climate change mitigation. She also stated that it was important to find ways across all of these domains to think about consequences and make the case for greater coordination and integration of efforts. Applegate stressed that there was a real opportunity for better coordination between the disaster reduction and national security communities. He noted that the dynamic between the two communities has been more fluid and collaborative during recent years than had been the case in the more distant past, likely a reflection of the national security community’s growing recognition that it has to take on both man-made and natural hazards to be properly prepared and resilient.

Abbott asked what the subcommittee viewed as its priorities for the upcoming year. Applegate noted that the SDR has a long-term planning focus and a short-term coordination function. Last year was marked by several natural disasters, so much of the subcommittee's focus was on short-term coordination. Hopefully 2011 will allow for more long-term planning. The SDR has been exploring the linkages between disaster reduction, resilience, and sustainability, and one opportunity would be to move the *Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction* and hazard-specific implementation plans into the S&T sustainability framework. Additionally, the SDR would like to move ahead with the Coastal Inundation Working Group as part of a broader focus on realizing the synergies between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

On the international front, SDR is looking forward to continuing in its role as the U.S. National Platform for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and to leading the U.S. Delegation to the Third Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in May. Also on the international front is a related opportunity, conveyed by Susan Cutter at the January 6th SDR meeting, to form a national committee to represent the U.S. at meetings of the Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) program. One of the challenges that the SDR faces is that it is an interagency body, governed by Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) guidelines, and yet the platform to the ISDR and any committee formed for the IRDR would ideally be cross-sectoral. In the past, the SDR has partnered with the Disasters Roundtable of the National Academies and worked with InterAction, but the challenge remains of finding ways to more effectively collaborate with non-federal entities given that the need for disaster reduction far exceeds the resources of the federal government. Also on the international front, the SDR had a very nice partnership in the summer of 2009 with USGCRP at the stage when it was trying to vet the authors for the IPCC Special Report "Managing Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation." Applegate noted that the SDR would welcome the opportunity to assist with the U.S. Government review of the report.

Nicholas Suntzeff (State) cited difficulties in international discussions caused by differing definitions of the term sustainability. He asked for further clarification of how the Administration was defining it. Abbott stated that for CENRS purposes the term is regarded to mean "patterns of development that promote human well being while preserving the life support systems of the planet." She referenced the article "Science and Technology for Sustainable Well-Being," written by Dr. Holdren for the January 25, 2008 edition of *Science*. The article is available at <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/319/5862/424.full>. Abbott noted that she directed the National Research Council's Board on Sustainable Development that authored the 1999 report "Our Common Journey: A Transition towards Sustainability." Rather than define sustainable development, the board reached the conclusion to recommend an approach to science and technology that moves the focus towards promoting human well-being while preserving the environment in concert. Abbott stated that she thinks the board's recommendation is still valid as an approach because sustainability is not an endpoint, but a process.

### **III. Approval of January Meeting Minutes**

The January Meeting Minutes were approved with the following changes. Nell Codner (NOAA) noted that John Cortinas had replaced Roger Pierce as the representative to SDR from NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research. Sezin Tokar (USAID) noted the World Bank, not the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, was the primary author of the report "Natural Hazards, UnNatural Disasters: the economics of effective prevention."

### **IV. Report from the Chair**

Applegate stated that there would be a briefing on February 11<sup>th</sup> at the Keck Center about the soon-to-be-released National Research Council report "Building Community Disaster Resilience through Private-Public Collaboration." The report is available at [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=13028](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13028).

Applegate also stated that since the bill containing the reauthorizations of NEHRP, the fire administration, and a revised version of the Wind Hazards Reduction Program did not pass during the last session of Congress, the reporting requirements contained in the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act of 2004 still pertained. He expected that OSTP and the SDR would reassemble the Wind Hazards Reduction Program Working Group in the near-term to begin work on the next biennial report to Congress on federal windstorm impact reduction programs.

#### **V. Report from the Vice-Chairs**

Dennis Wenger (NSF) announced that the Disasters Roundtable of the National Academies would be holding a workshop on March 1<sup>st</sup> at the Venable Conference Center entitled: “Using Lessons from Haiti and Chile to Reduce Global Risk.” Rich Olsen is scheduled to make the keynote address on the nature of the pre-earthquake conditions in the two countries and how they influenced response, recovery, and resilience issues. There will also be a whole variety of reports on research that was done in Haiti, including the problem of handling mass fatalities, rather than mass casualties. Topics will also include the issues of international aid, humanitarian relief, and temporary housing. The afternoon sessions are devoted to the experience of the Chile earthquake, including the advances in building code and design.

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

Tamara Dickenson (OSTP) passed on giving the NSTC Liaison’s report, noting that each topic she had intended to cover had already been addressed by Shere Abbott or during the report from the chair.

#### **VII. UN/ISDR: Upcoming Meetings and Other Activities**

There are three potential upcoming UN/ISDR meetings for SDR Members to be aware of. The first is the Regional Platform for the Americas (March 14-17, 2011, Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, Mexico). Those interested in participating are welcome to contact Nicholas Suntzeff ([SuntzeffN@state.gov](mailto:SuntzeffN@state.gov)). The second is the Global Platform meeting (May 8-13, 2011, Geneva, Switzerland). Those interested are welcome to contact David Applegate ([applegate@usgs.gov](mailto:applegate@usgs.gov)). Finally, the Canadians have offered to host a tri-lateral meeting including the U.S. and Mexico as a follow-on meeting to the one held at the National Science Foundation on November 3, 2010.

#### **VIII. U.S. Disaster Risk Reduction Assistance for Nepal**

Nicholas Suntzeff (State) explained that the Government of Nepal had contacted the U.S. Embassy in Katmandu to request help in organizing a high level symposium on disaster risk reduction for Nepal. Katmandu is perhaps the most vulnerable city in the world to natural disasters. The Government of Nepal is very aware of this fact as well as the need to implement mitigation measures. The U.S. Embassy in Nepal has been working with the Government of Nepal, the UN/ISDR, and USAID on this challenge. A two-day symposium on the topic will take place in mid-February, bringing together governments of the region—principally Pakistan, Nepal, and Bhutan—that would be involved in an immediate response to any disaster that occurred. While those involved do that disaster mitigation, is a critically important part of disaster risk reduction, the agenda for the mid-February meeting has been set and will primarily concentrate on response and recovery. USAID is the principal agency involved in the mid-February meeting, which is scheduled for February 14-15 in Nepal.

The Government of Nepal has proposed a second, high-level, follow-on meeting, which has been tentatively scheduled for April 15<sup>th</sup> in Washington, DC, on the margins of the World Bank and

International Monetary Fund meetings in April, currently scheduled for the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of that month. The date of April 15<sup>th</sup> is subject to change as the dates of the World Bank and IMF meetings are not yet firmly set. Nevertheless, the agenda for this proposed April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting is still in the works, so the SDR may have the ability to influence it or schedule side meetings.

Sezin Tokar (USAID) added that the agenda for the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting is still very much under consideration and will likely hinge on the outcome of the mid-February meetings in Nepal. Under consideration is the notion that the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting would attempt to leverage the presence of the finance ministers who will be in town for the World Bank and IMF meetings. Also possible is a format that would expand the scope of the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, giving it a more regional flavor while highlighting the vulnerability of Katmandu.

#### **IX. National Level Exercise 2011: New Madrid Earthquake Scenario**

Dr. Keith Holtermann currently serves as Director of the National Exercise Division within FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate, a position to which he brings over 35 years of experience in the field of emergency health services.

The National Exercise Division is responsible for implementing the National Exercise Program (NEP), which serves as the nation's overarching exercise program for interagency planning, organizing, conducting, and evaluating national level exercises as mandated by the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006. The NEP was established to provide the U.S. government, at all levels, with annual exercise opportunities to prepare for catastrophic crises ranging from terrorism to natural disasters. The National Level Exercise for 2011 (NLE 2011) is designated as a Tier I exercise, formerly known as the Top Official exercise or TOPOFF. Holtermann explained that the primary goal of Tier I exercises is for top officials to rehearse and understand their roles, responsibilities, assets, and know how to respond in the event of a catastrophic hazard impact or emergency, whether natural or man-made.

As mandated by Congress and under the direction of the White House, the NLE 2011 includes the participation of all appropriate federal department and agency senior officials, their deputies and staff, and key operational elements. Also involved will be top officials from state, county, and municipal governments. This year's exercise—which is the first time that a NLE has focused on a natural hazard—will simulate the catastrophic nature of a major earthquake in the central United States region of the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ). FEMA's National Exercise Division had originally planned the New Madrid exercise for 2010, but several state governments in the Midwest had already begun plans to hold an exercise on this scenario in 2011 to mark the bicentennial of the 1811 New Madrid earthquake. The federal planners therefore decided to shift their original timetable in order to team up with the states.

NLE 2011 activities will take place at command posts, emergency operation centers and other locations, including federal facilities in the Washington D.C. area and federal, regional, state, tribal, local and private sector facilities in the eight member states of the Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC). The eight member states of CUSEC encompass four different FEMA regions: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee (FEMA Region IV); Illinois and Indiana (FEMA Region V); Arkansas (FEMA Region VI); and Missouri (FEMA Region VII). Additionally, states that border the eight directly involved will likely be lending resources during the functional exercise, raising the total number of states that will be engaged. Also taking part will be NGOs, including the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), faith-based organizations, and over 200 members of the private sector, including IMB, Marriott, and Hilton Hotels.

Holtermann explained that the principal component of NLE 2011 will be a capstone functional exercise lasting from May 16-19. He also explained that the “capstone” nomenclature will likely be changed in the future since the functional exercises do not mark the culminating event of the national level exercises, which actually take place over the course of an entire year. The NLE 2011 kicked off in November of 2010 with a resource allocation workshop and is scheduled to end in October or November of 2011 with a lessons learned conference. The resource allocation workshop brought together in Nashville the 10 large providers of emergency goods and services as well as representatives of all 15 Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). Over a two-hour period, the state emergency managers were able to discuss their resource needs and likely shortages in the event of a disaster with the goods and services providers and ESF representatives. After the functional exercise, the states will hold recovery exercises, which in turn will be followed by a national recovery seminar in June. Other events include a National After Action Conference in July and a National Recovery Tabletop Exercise in September. Finally, this year for the first time, the NLE will end with a lessons learned conference, which is being planned as a multi-day, video-streamed event with multiple breakouts. Holtermann invited SDR members to become involved.

Peter Jutro (EPA) suggested that the participants at the after actions conference and lessons learned conference should consider how the NLE 2011 and subsequent exercises can inform the federal S&T research agenda.

Al Johnson (DOD) stated that damage to communications infrastructure in the parts of the Midwest that would be affected by a New Madrid seismic event would also critically impact communications between the East and West Coasts. Nicholas Suntzeff (State) noted that communications were a huge challenge in the aftermath of the 8.8 magnitude earthquake that struck Chile in February 2010.

#### **X. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

#### **XI. Future Meetings**

In 2011, the SDR will meet from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month in the Lincoln Room of the White House Conference Center. The meeting dates are:

Thursday, March 3, 2011	Thursday, July 7, 2011	Thursday, October 6, 2011
Thursday, April 7, 2011	*Thursday, August 4, 2011	Thursday, November 3, 2011
Thursday, May 5, 2011	Thursday, September 1, 2011	Thursday, December 1, 2011
Thursday, June 2, 2011		

\*Subject to cancellation

#### **XII. 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 Ross Faith (ross.fait@mantech.com).

#### **XIII. 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

**Secretariat**

Ross Faith 703-388-0308  
Barbara Haines-Parmele 703-388-0309

Ross.Faith@ManTech.com  
Barbara.Haines-Parmele@ManTech.com

**XIV. Summary of January Actions**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>By When</b>
Those interested in participating in the UN/ISDR Regional Platform Meeting for the Americas (March 14-17, 2011) should email Nicholas Suntzeff (SuntzeffN@state.gov).	SDR Member	ASAP
Send nominations for the U.S. delegation to the UN/ISDR Global Platform meeting (May 8-13, 2011) to Dave (aplegate@usgs.gov), copying Ross (ross.faith@mantech.com).	SDR Member	ASAP
Send Sezin Tokar (stokar@usaid.gov) your ".gov" e-mail address to receive USG-only updates from USAID on global disaster response activities.	SDR Members	Standing
Contact Ross (ross.faith@mantech.com) to receive copies of the Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction Implementation Plan packets or CD.	SDR Members	Standing
Let Dave (aplegate@usgs.gov) or Ross (ross.faith@mantech.com) know how you use the implementation plans, including when you link to the plans from your agency websites. Send Ross or Dave additional distribution suggestions, including relevant contact information.	SDR Members	Standing