

July 19, 2004

To: Members of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction (SDR)

From: Larry Roeder, Co-Chair, International Working Group
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Subject: Report of the July 19, 2004 International Working Group (IWG) of the SDR

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Agenda for the July 19 IWG Meeting:

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. World Conference on Disaster Reduction (Kobe, Japan, 18-22 January, 2005)
3. ISDR Prevention Website
4. Meeting with Dan Dubno
5. Close and Summary of Actions

Actions from the July 19 IWG Meeting:

- See World Conference Report, items B and C.

World Conference on Disaster Reduction (Kobe, Japan, 18-22 January 2005)

(a) Briefing on New York Meeting of July 15, 2004

Larry Roeder provided a briefing on a special preparatory meeting chaired by Japan in New York on July 15. That meeting covered (a) an outline of proposed outcomes for the World Conference; (b) an on-line consultation process available through the ISDR website; (c) organization of the World Conference, and (d)

other issues, mainly USG initiatives. The discussion in New York revealed a budget gap of around \$1.7 million to which the Department of State proposes to contribute \$200,000 (pending Congressional authorization). In addition, the group agreed that the agenda for the conference needs to be refined and that a plan for implementing conference recommendations also is needed. Finally, participants agreed that clarification of ISDR's post-conference role.

(b) National Reports for World Conference

Governments participating in the World Conference are encouraged to provide a national report on risk reduction activities. With agreement from the US Mission, Geneva and based on consultations with the SDR chair, the U.S. report will have two parts. The first will be the SDR Interim Report published in July 2003 and the second part will be a short update document highlighting accomplishments and initiatives from the last year. This update, authored by the IWG co-chairs and based upon member agency inputs to the Grand Challenges exercise, will be developed during August and September. The first draft will be produced by 2 August after which Dr. Echavarria and Mr. Roeder may consult with agency representatives to augment the information and documentation already provided.

Agencies interested in submitting information for use in this update may do so by August 2. Contributions will be incorporated by the International Working Group co-chairs and the update will be presented to SDR members in the September monthly meeting of the SDR. The update will follow the outlined described below. Please include international risk reduction activities, as well as domestic programs.

1. Current status of programs, main difficulties or gaps encountered, and challenges for the future:
 1. Political commitment and institutional aspects
 2. Risk identification (including early warning)
 3. Knowledge management (education, research, information, public awareness)
 4. Risk management applications/instruments (technical, social, financial, environmental)
 5. Preparedness and contingency planning
 6. Good practices in disaster risk management.

(c) Priorities to address at WCDR

The reports also must reflect government thinking on priorities to address at WCDR. The USG made a number of Science and technology recommendations which have been incorporated in the draft conference outcomes document (Tab B). The IWG has scheduled three special meetings in which SDR members can discuss the USG S&T recommendations and ways in which they can be included in Kobe. There also will be an opportunity to discuss which agencies should be invited to join the US delegation. Agency representatives are requested to provide new recommendations or comment on the information below and in Tab B by 5 p.m. on 28 July. The special IWG meetings are scheduled for August 12 (10 a.m.), September 9 (3 p.m.), and September 16 (3 p.m.) in the National Science Foundation building in Ballston, Virginia.

The following is a list of priorities identified for the WCDR, along with comments by other governments.

- The substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries.
- The integration of disaster risk considerations into national and local government development planning and programmes in order to improve sustainable development outcomes.
- The development of stronger institutions, mechanisms and community capacities that can systematically build resilience to natural hazards and disasters.
- The enhancement of participation by women, ethnic groups, the poor, handicapped and other at-risk populations in the development of risk-reduction and response plans.
- Taking advantage of emerging efforts to accelerate improvements in medium range (3-14 day) global forecasts of hazardous weather in both their accuracy and location.
- The enhancement of measures to preserve historic and cultural resources.
- The development of effective commercial insurance programs in order to enhance structural standards and reduce dependence on central authorities for disaster response.
- The enhancement of efforts which encourage the development of local (and national, as appropriate) building codes and reconstruction policies.

- The enhancement of global tracking and transmission of disaster information.
- The development of more effective early warning, evacuation and preparedness measures aimed at preserving livestock, animals in zoos, and companion animals used for purposes of health. A subset of this item will be to examine the relationship of disasters and the spread of animal diseases, often essential to a society's health and economy.
- The enhancement of partnerships with other international organizations, such as OECD, and with industry, academia, and the NGO community, so that each can take comparative advantage of the others' relative strengths.
- The placing of an emphasis on local responsibility for risk reduction.
- The enhancement of risk-reduction practices and information sharing on the spread of infectious disease related to disasters.

(d) July 28 Preparatory Meeting at the Department of State

On July 28, the Department of State is hosting a meeting of senior officials from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as well as Ambassadors and/or Deputy Chiefs of Mission for Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, China, Ecuador, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The purpose of the meeting is to show USG support for the World Conference; recommend participation by all nations; support the draft outcomes document; advance specific science and technology recommendations; and manage G77 expectations. The meeting will be chaired by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Mark Lagon (see also agenda in Tab A).

ISDR Prevention Website

Earlier this month, the ISDR secretariat proposed the creation of a risk prevention website. Though the details have yet to be finalized, Larry Roeder suggested that there may be an opportunity to partner with Dan Dubno and the CBS News disaster website. Mr. Dubno intends to hand over his CBS News disaster website at some point and this may be the appropriate occasion. Fernando Echavarria recommended facilitating a partnership between ISDR and google.com.

The ISDR risk prevention website will be a topic of a future IWG meeting.

Visit by Dan Dubno, Producer and Technologist at CBS News

Fernando Echavarria will not be able to attend the Special Meeting of the SDR and has requested that Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Lee Morin (OES) attend in his stead. Larry proposed inviting a representative from the Japanese Foreign Ministry, who will be in town that day. So far, twelve SDR members are attending.

Tab A: Agenda for July 28 Meeting at the Department of State

Room:

Time: 1:30-3:30

1. Introductions: Led by Dr. Mark Lagon, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State
2. Reason for World Conference on Disaster Reduction: Led by Japanese Delegation
3. United States interests in international risk reduction: Led by William Garvelink, Deputy Assistant Administrator, US AID
4. US Science and Technology Interests, Presented by Larry Roeder
5. US Initiatives to support WCDR
6. Goals for WCDR: Led by Participating Governments
7. Conference Outcomes Document. This is the main political statement of the Conference.
8. Need to decide how to implement the World Conference
9. Closing comments