

6.2 UN agencies and scope of activities

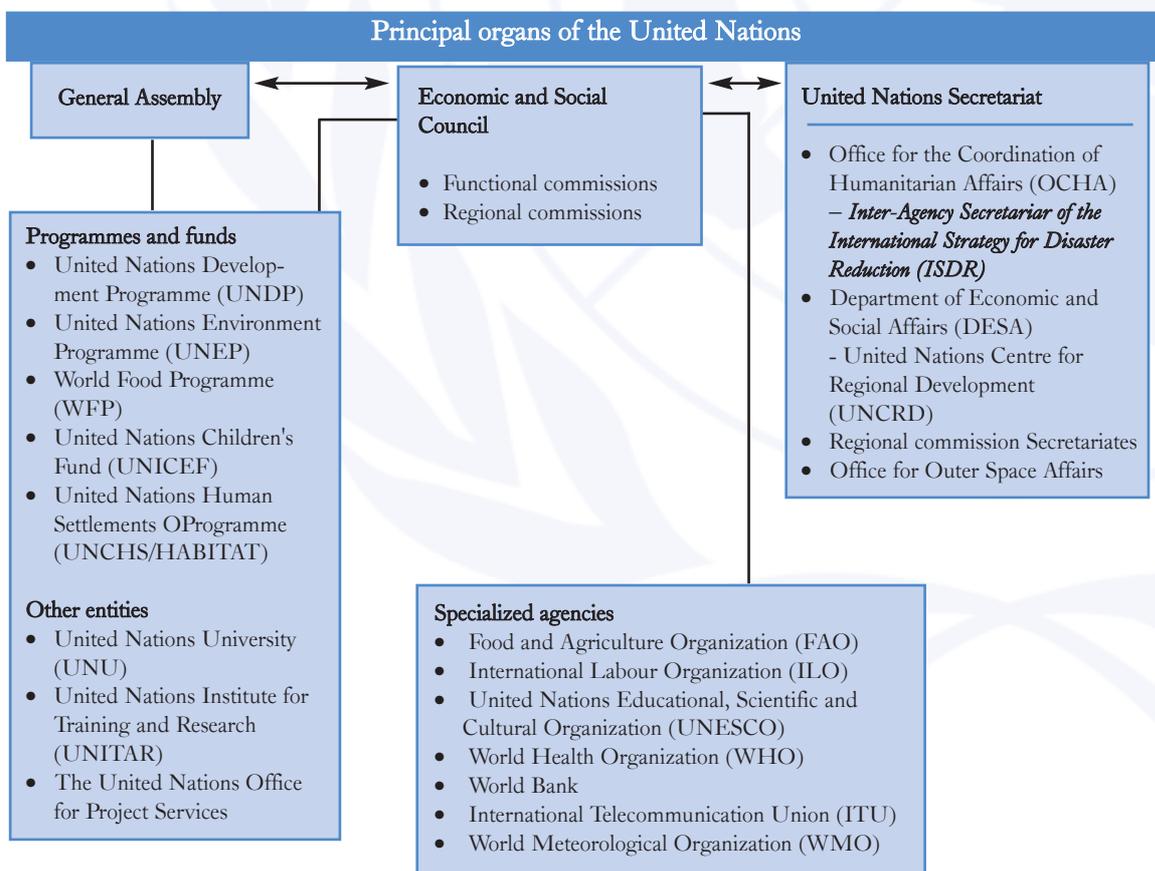
Introduction

The United Nations system is a mosaic that reflects the complexity of activities to be conducted in order to fulfil the objectives and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is composed of principal organs, specialized agencies and other autonomous organizations carrying out specific mandates. Reducing vulnerability and risk to natural or man-made hazards is addressed by many entities of the United Nations system within the framework of their respective field of activities. By establishing the **International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)** as the successor arrangement to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR, 1990-2000), the international community recognized the need for a consolidated and coordinated approach to disaster and risk reduction by concerned entities within and outside the United Nations system.

The purpose of this section is to give an indication of how the parts of the United Nations system function when it comes to disaster and risk reduction. It is a general overview, which does not include disaster relief or emergency management activities. This brief assessment of the key players within the United Nations system and their action in disaster reduction seeks to demonstrate the potential for increased coherence in this field and facilitate a targeted approach to the system by Governments and other entities.

Graphic overview of the United Nations system in relation to disaster reduction

Only United Nations entities relevant to disaster reduction are mentioned. This overview is not intended to illustrate a comprehensive explanation of the complete United Nations system or hierarchy.



Principal organs of the United Nations System concerned with disaster and risk reduction

■ General Assembly

The General Assembly is the main deliberative organ of the United Nations and is composed of representatives of all Member States. While the decisions of the Assembly expressed in resolutions have no legally binding force for Governments, they carry the weight of world opinion as well as the moral authority of the world community. Decisions of the Assembly are based on documentation produced at its request on reports from United Nations organs (i.e. Secretary-General's reports, reports from United Nations conferences). Non-United Nations entities are widely consulted for the drafting of these reports, which therefore include an overview of issues at stake. The Assembly's awareness of the necessity to reduce the impact of disasters began in 1971 when it adopted a resolution for the creation of the *Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO)* for the improved coordination of "assistance in cases of natural disaster and other disaster situations", including disaster mitigation. In 1988 the Assembly endorsed the establishment of a *Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP)*, recommending the upgrading of professional skills in disaster management through inter-agency training programmes under the joint management of the *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)* and UNDRO. The Assembly recognized the need to focus on disaster reduction as an activity in itself in 1987 and launched the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction in 1989 followed by ISDR in 1999. Resolutions were also passed on the need for cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon (from 1997) and on early warning capacities of the United Nations system with regard to natural disasters (from 1994). Disaster reduction is generally discussed under the segment Environment and Sustainable Development in the Second Committee of the General Assembly. The Humanitarian segment of the Assembly might touch upon the subject when related to humanitarian issues ("relief to development" is discussed in the Third Committee).

Web site: www.un.org/ga/56/

■ Economic and Social Council

The Economic and Social Council is the principal organ coordinating the economic, social and related work of the United Nations and has 54 members, elected for three-year terms by the General Assembly. The Council cooperates with, and to a certain extent also coordinates, the work of United Nations programmes (such as *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*, the *United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)* and the *United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)*) and the specialized agencies (such as *Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)*, the *International Labour Organization (ILO)*, the *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)* and the *World Health Organization (WHO)*, all of which report to the Council. The United Nations, and the Economic and Social Council in particular, are increasingly considering *non-governmental organizations (NGOs)*, including academic institutions, private sector and other stakeholders, as partners and valuable links to civil society. The Council has long since recognized that the promotion of economic growth and sustainable development cannot be achieved without adequate measures to prevent and reduce the impact of natural disasters. It has also consistently called for a coordinated approach to disaster reduction within and outside the United Nations system. Decisions and resolutions of the Council include recommendations to the General Assembly on supporting efforts for the good functioning of IDNDR and later on ISDR as well as on issues such as early warning and the El Niño phenomenon.

Nine functional commissions and five regional commissions are part of the Council's so-called machinery that carries out its work. The functional commissions, serviced by the United Nations Secretariat, are deliberative bodies whose role is to consider and make recommendations on issues in their areas of responsibility and expertise. Two commissions are particularly relevant to disaster reduction: the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

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United Nations Secretariat

The United Nations Secretariat, headed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, services the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and administers the programmes and policies laid down by them.

ISDR, placed under the direct authority of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, is the only entity within the Secretariat entirely dedicated to disaster reduction. The *Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)*, the *Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)* and the secretariats of the regional commissions consider disaster reduction in relation to their mandated activities. The *United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD)* also performs specific disaster reduction-related activities, in particular in its Disaster Management Planning Hyogo Office in Kobe, Japan.

● The Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR)

Comprehensive information on the ISDR secretariat can be found in the section on ISDR (see pages 19- 20).

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● Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Formerly *Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA)*, which in turn had replaced UNDR0 in 1992, OCHA is led by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs/Emergency Relief Coordinator and located in New York and Geneva. OCHA aims at alleviating human suffering by facilitating international coordination for the effective and efficient delivery of assistance to victims of natural and man-made disasters. While concentrating on the response side of disasters, OCHA also promotes preparedness and prevention efforts to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters and assists the operational humanitarian agencies in developing common policies to improve planning, preparedness and response to natural disasters, particularly for protracted disasters

such as drought. In this respect, the *Response Coordination Branch (RCB)* as well as the *Emergency Services Branch (ESB)* collaborate closely with UNDP and other relevant United Nations and non-United Nations programmes and agencies on activities such as improving links with national authorities, implementing lessons learned and/or organizing seminars to discuss coordination mechanisms. Moreover, the ISDR Secretariat in Geneva, OCHA and UNDP maintain periodic working meetings to share information and engage in common plans and activities related to disaster reduction. Working with the resident coordinator, the United Nations country team and through its regional disaster response advisers, OCHA maintains close contact with countries prone to natural disasters before and between crises. *The Regional Disaster Response Advisers* provide technical, strategic and training assistance to Governments, United Nations agencies and regional organizations in order to improve natural disaster planning, response and post-emergency reconstruction efforts. Desk officers based in Geneva monitor for each region weather conditions, earthquake bulletins and the news services for potential natural disasters as well as environmental and technological emergencies. The *United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC)* team is a stand-by instrument composed of national professionals drawn from Governments and/or agencies from around the globe and mobilized within 24 hours to assist affected countries and the United Nations resident coordinators in assessing damage and preparing recommendations for adequate support often including

actions towards disaster reduction. Administered by OCHA, *ReliefWeb* (www.reliefweb.int) is an online source of information on humanitarian emergencies, including useful tools and documentation for disaster prevention such as time-critical situation reports, maps and financial contribution tracking, searchable archives of over 150,000 emergency response documents and 15,000 links to country-specific background information. The *Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)*, chaired by the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs/Emergency Relief Coordinator, brings together a wide range of United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian partners, including agencies, NGOs, and international organizations such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, to facilitate inter-agency decision-making on the response to complex emergencies and natural disasters.

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● Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA)

This department is led by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and is located in New York. The predecessor to DESA, the Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, was created as a result of the Earth Summit, held in Rio in 1992. The DESA multidimensional programme promotes broad-based and sustainable development through an integrated approach to economic, social, environmental, population and gender-related aspects of development. The Department serves as the secretariat for the Commission on Sustainable Development and is currently organizing the World Summit

on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 26 August-4 September 2002). The functions of DESA include normative work, coordination and policy advisory services supplemented by research and training. DESA activities are guided by the programmes and platforms of action adopted by major United Nations conferences and summits, as well as the Economic and Social Council machinery. Several divisions of the Department are concerned with disaster reduction, particularly the *Division for Sustainable Development (DSD)* with its Water, Natural Resources and Small Islands Branch and the *Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)*.

Division for Sustainable Development: The mission of DSD is to facilitate the implementation of Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests (also known as the Forest Principles), and the Global Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The Division carries out multi-year work programmes on sustainable development indicators, with interest in expanding the work on disaster reduction indicators. DSD provides substantive services to the Economic and Social Council functional commission CSD. As such, it serves as the secretariat for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. CSD was created in December 1992 and has 53 members for terms of office of three years. Its function is to follow up on the Earth Summits.

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Division for the Advancement of Women: DAW promotes and supports the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the work of intergovernmental bodies, policy and programmes of departments and offices of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations system at the national and regional levels. The Division also provides substantive servicing to the Economic and Social Council functional commission, CSW, which is composed of 45 members elected by the Council for a period of four years.

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● **United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD)**

The UNCRD head office, located in Nagoya, Japan, was created in 1971 and encourages through its substantive programmes for training and research in regional development as well as information dissemination. The Centre reports to DESA. Since 1992 the UNCRD Africa Office based in Nairobi has been mandated to carry out training and research activities, advisory services and information exchange related to local and regional development in African countries. The UNCRD Project Office for Latin America and the Caribbean was established in Bogotá, Colombia in 1997, to carry out UNCRD activities in Latin America and the Caribbean. It conducted three sub-regional workshops (1998) in collaboration with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the IDNDR secretariat, in order to assess sectoral needs in terms of vulnerability and risk reduction to natural hazards for sustainable cities and commercial corridors.

The UNCRD Disaster Management Planning Hyogo Office was established in Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture, in 1999 in the aftermath of the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake of 1995.

Activities of this office include basic research programmes for (a) the design of community-based projects for disaster management planning; and (b) disaster management capacity-building introducing best practices case studies in developing countries. During the past three years, the Hyogo Office has developed, tested and evaluated tools that are now recognized as the basic tools for disaster mitigation at community level. The office closely cooperated with the IDNDR Secretariat in carrying out the RADIUS (Risk Assessment Tools for Diagnosis of Urban Area against Seismic Disasters) Initiative (*see page 75*).

The Hyogo Office conducted research projects in developing countries with specific focus on urban vulnerability to earthquakes at the pre-disaster stage (Global Earthquake Safety Initiative (GESI)) and on rural vulnerability to earthquakes at the post-disaster stage (rehabilitation). In the latter the Gujarat earthquake was given special attention. In addition to these yearly programmes the Hyogo Office has been involved in developing a global database of active faults, and its possible hazards, in cooperation with the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC). It is also engaged in a community development project in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, and a project promoting the concept of a School Earthquake Safety Initiative (SESI). As part of the disaster education campaign, the Hyogo Office initiated a Culture Exchange Programme between the high school students of Kathmandu, Nepal, and Kobe, Japan. The Office performed training programmes and capacity-building in urban and rural communities, organized workshops for the dissemination of best practices, provided advisory services and promoted networking of different sectors of communities.

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● **Regional Commissions**

The regional economic commissions were founded by the Economic and Social Council for the purposes of promoting greater economic cooperation within and between regions, contributing to the economic and social development of a region, coordinating actions directed towards this end and reinforcing economic relationships among the countries and with the other nations of the world. The five commissions are the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The secretariats of these regional commissions are part of the United Nations Secretariat and perform similar functions including disaster reduction activities, although adapted to the needs and priorities of the region with which they are entrusted.

● **The secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**

Headed by an Executive Secretary at the level of Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, the ESCAP secretariat is located in Bangkok, Thailand. This Commission, comprising 52 members and associate members, promotes capacity-building in developing countries and contributes to the mainstreaming of disaster reduction into sustainable development with particular focus on water-related disasters, especially floods. Activities in this context include the organization of seminars and training courses for flood control and management, a regional overview of experiences in water-related disaster management in Asia and a regional project for "strengthening capacity in participatory planning and management for flood mitigation and preparedness in large river basins". In cooperation with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), ESCAP conducted a regional survey, which has contributed to the strengthening of regional cooperation in flood forecasting and disaster reduction. Similarly, ESCAP provided advisory services to the secretariat of the Mekong River Commission on the formulation of the regional strategy for flood management and mitigation.

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● **The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**

The ECLAC secretariat, led by an Executive Secretary, is based in Santiago de Chile with subregional headquarters in Mexico City and Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, country offices in Bogotá, Brasília, Buenos Aires and Montevideo and a liaison office in Washington, D.C. The Commission, with its 41 member States and seven associate members, plays an active role in disaster reduction, concentrating especially on the socio-economic impact of natural and other related hazards. In this context, ECLAC organized a series of inter-agency assessment studies on the macroeconomic impact of natural disasters in the region since the earthquake in Managua in 1972, including the 1999 floods and landslides in Venezuela, the earthquakes in Colombia (1999) and in El Salvador (2001), Hurricanes Georges, Mitch (1998) and Keith (2000), as well as climatic variations like the El Niño current's effects (1997-1998) and the severe drought that affected Central America in 2001 and the earthquake of El Salvador in 2001. ECLAC has over the years developed a methodology to assess the impact of disasters on development including an environmental impact analysis, a gender perspective and a comprehensive analysis of the macroeconomic impact of disasters and its effect on reconstruction plans. Currently, this methodology is being disseminated with the support of organizations such as the Inter-American Development Bank, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/WHO and the World Bank and training is being provided for its use. ECLAC is also advancing the development of indicators of vulnerability and risk, in terms of measuring the economic, social and environmental impact of extreme natural phenomena. In addition to these activities, the Commission has implemented training programmes for small island developing states vulnerable to hurricanes through its regional office for the Caribbean.

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● Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA)

Work of the General Assembly is also carried out by bodies it has established to study and report on specific issues. In this respect, the United Nations *Office for Outer Space Affairs* (OOSA), based in Vienna and linked to the United Nations *Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space* (COPUOS), has developed and is implementing a programme for an Integrated Space Application System for Disaster Management, in cooperation with a number of United Nations agencies and programmes as well as other entities such as the *Committee on Earth Observation Satellites* (CEOS). This activity is carried out in response to the call for implementing an integrated global system capable of using space applications and space-based services for disaster mitigation, relief and prevention (UNISPACE III Conference). Space technologies can play important roles in the reduction of disasters.

The use of such technologies can be particularly useful in the risk assessment, mitigation and preparedness phases of disaster management. Space technologies are also vital to the early warning and management of the effects of disasters. For developing countries to be able to incorporate the routine use of space technology-based solutions there is a need to increase awareness, build national capacity and also develop solutions that are customized and appropriate to the needs of the developing world. OOSA is focusing on the definition and successful transfer of such solutions by holding Regional Workshops (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean) on the Use of Space Technology for Disaster Management. A regional plan of action will then be defined leading to the definition and implementation of pilot projects that will incorporate and refine the use of space technology for disaster management.

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Specialized agencies and other autonomous organizations and disaster reduction

Organizations and agencies part of the United Nations system carry out active programmes in support of disaster reduction and many of them have strengthened their disaster reduction capacity in their respective areas of competence during recent years. All agencies and programmes work with national or local authorities and in many cases with civil society organizations and groups.

Programmes and funds

● United Nations Development Programme

The overarching mission of UNDP is to help countries build national capacity to achieve sustainable human development. The Programme is giving top priority to the elimination of poverty and the building of equity by providing development advice, advocacy and grant support. UNDP, with headquarters in New York and specific functions in Geneva, delivers most of its services through its 132 country offices, supported by regional bureaux, specialized programmes and trust funds. In each country office, the UNDP resident representative normally also serves as the resident coordinator for the United Nations system as a whole.

UNDP is the most substantive United Nations programme to promote and support the implementation of risk and vulnerability reduction in developing countries. In 1997, a General Assembly decision transferred the responsibilities of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (head of OCHA) for operational activities for natural disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness to UNDP while OCHA retained its coordination function of international relief operations. UNDP has been a member of the ISDR Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction since its inception and chairs the Working Group on Risk, Vulnerability and Impact Assessment.

The UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR)-formerly known as the Emergency Response Division (ERD)-is the in-house mechanism set up to provide a quicker and more effective response in Countries in Special Development Situations (CSDS) through the provision of services. As part of BCPR, the Geneva-based Disaster Reduction and Recovery Programme (DRRP) focuses on promoting and supporting capacity-building and/or strengthening of appropriate regional

organizations, national authorities and institutions for mitigation, prevention and preparedness of natural, technological/industrial and environmental disasters, through a structure of regional advisers. Main functions of DRRP include support to preventive development and training by:

- Assessing vulnerability to crises and natural disasters;
- Establishing early warning systems;
- Developing and maintaining a framework of developmental responses and other contingency disaster plans;
- Forming and strengthening country United Nations disaster management teams;
- Integrating disaster preparedness, mitigation, prevention and response programmes into national development programmes;
- Regular reporting and updating of important developments in CSDS, as a part of the early warning process;
- Contributing to human resource development by improving capabilities in risk and vulnerability analyses; planning for contingencies; designing responsive structures; implementing prevention and mitigation strategies for disaster and crisis.

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The UNDP *Drylands Development Centre* formerly the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO) -moved to Nairobi in early 2002. The Centre is responsible for promoting sound dryland management and development as well as drought preparedness and mitigation as part of sustainable human development. UNSO has been an advocate of the *United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNCCD)* and provides technical and catalytic financial support to affected countries for the implementation of the Convention.

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Capacity 21 is a trust fund launched by UNDP after the Rio Earth Summit of 1992, which works with countries to build skills and a knowledge base to implement the principles of sustainable development as outlined in Agenda 21. Capacity 21 promotes a partnership for increased coping capacity to deal with natural disasters in small island developing States, in the framework of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Barbados Plan of Action. www.undp.org/capacity21/

● United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

UNEP is the leading global environmental authority and promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations. The Programme is based in Nairobi, Kenya, and counts several regional and thematic offices and programmes around the world. The UNEP Governing Council identified increasing environmental emergencies as one of the environmental threats that needed to be addressed and emphasized the important role the Programme played globally in the areas of emergency prevention, preparedness, assessment, mitigation and response. Through its

Disaster Management Branch in Nairobi, part of the Division for Environment Policy Implementation (DEPI), UNEP has developed a strategic framework on emergency prevention, preparedness, assessment, mitigation and response with an agenda for action which serve as basis for the development and implementation of programmes on disaster reduction at the national, subregional, regional and global levels. Further, has carried out a number of activities aimed at reducing the impact of natural and other related environmental and technological disasters in furtherance of the objectives of ISDR. It is a member of the ISDR Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and chairs the Task Force's Working Group on Early Warning. It also has a joint unit with OCHA in Geneva to assist countries in responding to a variety of environmental emergencies.

In line with its role in environmental monitoring, assessment and early warning, the UNEP Division for Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA) has launched a *Global Environment Outlook (GEO)* report series which contains baseline information on environmental emerging issues and threats, as well as policies being implemented at the global and regional levels. www.unep.org/DEWA.

The UNEP *Global Resource Information Database (GRID)* is a global network of environmental information centres and aims at providing and facilitating access to environmental data and information for decision-making and policy setting. It underpins the UNEP review of the state of the world's environment and provides early warning on environmental hazards. The UNEPNet partnership, a global information network, offers access to distributed and remote databases from different institutions to develop comprehensive and local solutions, often relying on best practices from various regions and countries of the world.

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The *UNEP Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at a Local Level (APELL)*, based at the Industry and Environment Office in Paris, is a programme serving as a tool for disaster prevention and preparedness and raises public awareness of the need to reduce environmental emergencies and damage. It seeks to minimize, particularly in developing countries, the occurrence and harmful effects of technological accidents and emergencies resulting from human activity or as the consequence of natural disasters.

Web site:

www.uneptie.org/pc/apell/disasters/disasters.html

● World Food Programme (WFP)

WFP is mandated by the United Nations to combat global hunger. Based in Rome, Italy, the Programme counts 85 country offices and eight regional offices to assist populations in need. As the food-aid arm of the United Nations, WFP meets emergency needs, provides the necessary logistics to deliver food and supports economic and social development by promoting policies, strategies and operations for the benefit of the poor and hungry. WFP has been a member of the ISDR Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction since its inception in 2000.

In 1999 the WFP key strategy document entitled *Enabling Development* identified disaster mitigation as one of the five priority areas of action with a focus on reduction of the impact of natural hazards on food security for vulnerable populations. A steering committee for disaster mitigation was established to assist country and regional offices to integrate disaster mitigation activities into their development programmes. The WFP dual mandate for development and emergencies results in development activities designed to facilitate potential emergency response. Guidelines on disaster mitigation have been prepared and field-tested in pilot country offices. The formalization of the WFP role in disaster mitigation is reflected in the new generation of programming documents. In 2000 already nine of the 11 Country Strategy Outlines and Country Programmes that were approved by the Executive Board had

included disaster mitigation activities. For example, WFP is supporting water harvesting in Sudan to decrease the impact of drought on rural livelihoods. In Tanzania, the WFP Country Programme is using food-for-work activities to create assets, such as grain stores and access roads, in order to improve long-term food security and decrease the vulnerability of households to drought.

The WFP emphasis on early warning and contingency planning includes collaboration with the Framework Team based in New York and the WFP Vulnerability and Analysis Mapping Unit (VAM). The Office of the Humanitarian Adviser (OHA) is responsible for coordinating the overall contingency planning process, while the Augmented Logistics Intervention Team for Emergencies (ALITE) collates specific logistics-based contingency planning information such as logistics capacity assessments (LCAs).

WFP

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● United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF headquarters are based in New York. UNICEF has regional offices and country offices in 162 countries and territories around the world. The UNICEF mandate to protect and improve the well-being of the most vulnerable groups, children and women, anywhere in the world, by definition, includes the aspect of disaster preparedness and prevention. By supporting empowerment of communities at the local level and capacity-building at the national level, UNICEF programmes enhance abilities to deal with disasters and to mitigate the negative effects of disasters. Policy and procedural guidelines for UNICEF staff in emergencies include both emergency response and preparedness/prevention activities.

The foundation of UNICEF action lies in its long-term country programme approach and its development orientation. Recognizing the central importance of building capacity and self-reliance for effective and sustainable assistance and reducing the vulnerability of children to future disasters, UNICEF aims to enhance rather than supply locally available resources and mechanisms. The maximum involvement of individuals, communities and local and national institutions is stressed at all levels of UNICEF development and emergency action.

Following the recommendation of the Yokohama Strategy to include disaster reduction into national development plans, UNICEF programme and policy guidance includes incorporation of disaster reduction elements into country programmes in disaster-prone countries. Vulnerability and capacity assessment in relation to natural hazards is being introduced as an integral part of the situation analysis process at the country level. UNICEF cooperates with UNDP as part of the United Nations country teams at the country level in support of disaster preparedness activities in national development plans. UNICEF is playing an important role in tackling both analysis and capacity-building nationally and in the empowerment of communities. Selected programmes in disaster-prone countries enhance abilities to respond to immediate needs and to mitigate the negative effects of disasters. For example, a major thrust of UNICEF emergency assistance in a number of emergency countries is the development and institutionalization of local capacities for disaster preparedness and management.

In order to ensure adequate levels of preparedness for effective response in emergencies, UNICEF country and regional offices carry out preparedness planning as part of their planning and programming process. Preparedness planning includes risk assessment identifying all types of risks from natural hazards to economic distress and civil conflicts.

In addition to viewing support to sustainable development as the key element for disaster reduction, UNICEF country offices in different parts of the world are involved in specific activities geared towards improved awareness of potential natural disasters. These activities

include development of education and awareness materials and campaigns for children and adults. UNICEF collaborates closely with the ISDR secretariat outpost in Costa Rica and they have jointly developed educational and awareness materials available on the web sites of both organizations.

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● **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)**

UN-HABITAT promotes socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development, good urban governance and the achievement of adequate shelter for all. It is based in Nairobi, Kenya, and is assisted by three regional (Brazil, Japan and Kenya) and several liaison and information offices worldwide. The Programme has been a member of the ISDR Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction since 2002.

The establishment of ISDR coincided with the consolidation of the process of restructuring carried out by UN-HABITAT. A key component of this process was the consolidation of the Risk and Disaster Management Programme (RDMP) and the establishment of the Disaster, Post-Conflict and Safety Section (DPCSS) to cater for an increasing demand from member countries for technical support, normative and policy tools and field operational capacity concerning disaster prevention, mitigation and post-disaster rehabilitation in human settlements, as well as on issues related to urban safety. UN-HABITAT disaster-related activities focus in particular on the physical and management components of shelter, infrastructure and service, with priority given to activities at the local level. Emphasis is given to the development of training and technical support programmes to increase the capacity of local authorities and communities for improved disaster and human settlements



management in a context of good local governance. UN-HABITAT is an active partner of ISDR, especially in the areas of land and urban management, impact assessment and capacity-building. Processes such as the Global Campaigns on Urban Governance and for Secure Tenure constitute important opportunities to promote disaster reduction in urban areas and strengthen collaboration with local authorities.

RDMP under DPCSS is a programme established to strengthen UN-HABITAT capacity to deliver technical cooperation and capacity-building services with a focus on direct country support, with the objective of helping vulnerable communities and human settlements to reduce vulnerability and better manage the effects of disasters and conflict. RDMP provides support to national governments, local authorities and communities in close cooperation with UN-HABITAT technical cooperation units and other specialized programmes. As part of its normative functions, RDMP develops and disseminates management tools and capacity-building activities. Its operational activities deliver direct support to national and local partners through:

- Technical advisory missions upon request by Governments and external support agencies;
- Execution of assessments in disaster-prone/hit and post-conflict countries;
- Identification, design, technical backstopping and follow-up of operational projects in response to countries' demands;
- Participation in donor consultations and negotiations for the provision of external support to affected countries;
- Assessment of global and regional demands for support on disasters and human settlements management and the design and implementation of global/regional projects and methodological approaches through collaboration with countries and other external support agencies.

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Specialized agencies

● Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

The FAO general mandate is to raise the levels of nutrition and standards of living, to improve agricultural productivity and to better the condition of rural populations. Based in Rome, Italy, FAO has engaged itself to help building a food-secure world for present and future generations over the next 15 years, as adopted in its Strategic Framework (2000). FAO counts five regional and five subregional offices and about 80 country offices working directly with member countries and other development partners at national level to coordinate interventions including with regard to disaster management. FAO is a member of the ISDR Task Force for Disaster Reduction and participates actively in its working groups.

The World Food Summit of 1996 mandated FAO, among others, to assist member countries develop national food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping systems (FIVIMS), based on the existing national food security information systems, many of which were established with FAO assistance, with a view to halving malnutrition by 2015 and reducing food insecurity and rural poverty, which includes disaster preparedness as well as effective and sustainable responses to food and agricultural emergencies. FAO developed an important strategy of which the key component is to strengthen the capacity of communities and local institutions in preparing for and addressing natural disasters, recognizing that generally the resource-poor are the most vulnerable while the people most severely affected by disasters are often those living in rural areas. In order to reduce disruption of agricultural and food systems, this strategic objective focuses on:

- Strengthening disaster preparedness and mitigating the impact of emergencies that affect food security and the productive capacities of rural populations;
- Forecasting and providing early warning of adverse conditions in the food and agricultural sectors, and of impending food emergencies;
- Strengthening programmes for agricultural relief and rehabilitation, and facilitating the transition from emergency relief to

reconstruction and development in food and agriculture; and

- Strengthening local capacities and coping mechanisms by guiding the choice of agricultural practices, technologies and support services to reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience.

Through its normative and operational programmes, FAO assists and provides technical assistance to member States in the development and implementation of disaster prevention programmes and preparedness plans, in order to reduce the vulnerability of agricultural production systems to disasters. FAO, through its World Agricultural Information Centre (WAICENT), develops and maintains a web site on disaster-related activities to provide access to disaster reduction information and has mobilized international support through its Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS). This system monitors food supply and demand around the world, provides policy makers and analysts with up-to-date information on crop prospects and gives early warning on imminent food crises. FAO has upgraded its capability to provide an operational service on environmental information through an Advanced Real-Time Environmental Monitoring Information System (ARTEMIS) using satellite remote sensing data. Moreover, the FAO Environment and Natural Resources Service of the Sustainable Development Department develops various spatial information infrastructure and databases and uses integrated remote sensing and geographic information systems for sustainable development planning, including disaster impact assessments and mapping of risk and vulnerability to natural hazards.

For the sake of reducing impacts of disasters on rural poverty and food insecurity, FAO assists member countries in the adoption of sustainable agricultural and land-use systems. The FAO Land and Water Development Division plays an important role in reversing degradation and reducing vulnerability to disasters through promoting the development of sustainable and resilient agro-ecosystems and the efficient, productive and environmentally sound use of land and water resources. Integrated planning and management of land resources are an essential prerequisite to implementing the multiple national action plans and



sectoral strategies that emanated from the Agenda 21 process and related conventions and thereby to achieving sustainable agricultural and rural development.

The Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) assists low-income food deficit countries in improving food security both at national and at household levels, through rapid increases in food production and productivity, by reducing year-to-year variability in production and by improving people's access to food. Chronic malnutrition and food insecurity can be caused by high seasonal and year-to-year variability in food supplies, often the result of unreliable rainfall and insufficient water for crop and livestock production. Community-centred nutrition programmes will strengthen livelihood resilience to natural disaster through increased household food security, better health and appropriate care for vulnerable individuals (small children, pregnant and lactating women, elderly people, the chronically sick and disabled).

The FAO Emergency Coordination Group, chaired by the Assistant Director-General of the Department of Technical Cooperation, is the organizational mechanism for the overall coordination of emergency and disaster reduction-related issues. An interdisciplinary process has been established within FAO to strengthen its capacity to address disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness and post-emergency relief and rehabilitation in a more integrated way, together with member countries and partners. The areas of attention initially identified include:

- The preparation of a disaster management database;
- The development of a guide for emergency needs assessment and guidance on management of food and agricultural emergencies; and
- The development of strategies and capacity-building on drought mitigation, including a regional workshop and programme development on capacity-building in drought mitigation.

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● **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**

UNESCO has its headquarters in Paris, France, and 73 field offices and units in different parts of the world. The main objective of UNESCO is to contribute to peace and security in the world by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, culture and communication in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

UNESCO is a member of the ISDR Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and promotes activities aimed at developing a better scientific understanding of the occurrence and distribution of disasters in time and space in respect of natural hazards and the mitigation of their effects. It contributed actively to IDNDR. UNESCO is also active in the area of educational material development to raise public awareness and facilitate public information and the provision of technical advice on the hazard resistant construction of schools and the protection of cultural heritage.

The UNESCO scientific and technical contribution to disaster reduction is promoted under the Organization's natural hazards programmes in the Earth sciences and builds on its five intergovernmental and international scientific programmes: the International Geological Correlation Programme, the International Hydrological Programme, the Man and Biosphere Programme, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and the Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST). The Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) hosted in IOC provides a framework to coordinate systematic observations of the world's oceans. Both the Medium-Term Strategy (2002-2007) and the Programme and Budget for 2002-2003 include provisions for an interdisciplinary programme related to natural disaster reduction.

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● World Health Organization (WHO)

WHO is the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for health. WHO is a decentralized organization with about 150 country offices worldwide and six regional offices in Africa, the Americas, the Eastern Mediterranean region, Europe, South-East Asia and the Western Pacific. Its headquarters are based in Geneva, Switzerland. The purpose of WHO presence at country level is to assist member States to achieve sustainable national health policy goals and to draw on the experience of individual countries to build public health knowledge that benefits the rest of the world. WHO has been a member of the ISDR Task Force for Disaster Reduction since 2002.

WHO works at country, regional and global levels for disaster mitigation, emergency preparedness and response, as well as for advocacy for health and humanitarian action. Failure on the part of the health sector to be institutionally prepared is particularly costly, not only in terms of lives lost, but also technically and politically. WHO aims to achieve a reduction of avoidable death and illness that result from any type of natural or man-made disaster and to ensure that member States and the international community are equipped to prevent disasters and mitigate their health consequences, in synergy between relief and sustainable development. WHO applies the epidemiological method and the public health model to emergency management and disaster reduction. Risk reduction, preparedness and response against epidemics are responsibilities of WHO.

More specifically, WHO focuses on strengthening health systems for preparedness and response against all types of disaster. Training is provided to Ministries of Health and their staff in preparedness and response, as well as for the development of emergency contingency plans. WHO distributes guidelines, publications and audio-visual material on applying best public health practices in preparing for and assessing the impact of disasters. The WHO early health assessment and health intelligence web site provides situational information including baseline statistics, health situation reports and epidemiological surveillance data.

The health sector does not exist in isolation and must cooperate with other groups involved in the overall framework for emergency preparedness and establish priorities in accordance with the overall disaster response plan. WHO has several collaborating centres around the world, whose work is related to disaster reduction, including the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), School of Public Health at the University of Louvain in Brussels. In Latin America and the Caribbean, there is the School of Public Health at the University of Antioquia, Colombia, for higher education in disaster management issues and the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Chile for disaster mitigation in hospitals and health services.

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The WHO Regional Office for the Americas, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), is the most active WHO office in the area of disaster reduction. PAHO is also part of the inter-American system and the office has been active in reducing the impact of natural and other related environmental and technological disasters in the Americas and the Caribbean since the mid-seventies. PAHO was a close collaborator and contributor to IDNDR in Latin America and the Caribbean. The PAHO disaster preparedness programme has three subregional offices (Barbados, Costa Rica and Quito). PAHO contributes to institutional strengthening by supporting the creation and enhancement of disaster programmes in the Ministries of Health in all countries of the region and promotes coordination with other sectors involved in disaster reduction. It organizes workshops on all aspects of disaster management for the benefit of professionals dealing with disaster reduction. In addition, PAHO encourages universities throughout the region to incorporate disaster management in their formal curriculum. The preparation and distribution of training materials have been a cornerstone of the programme. Over the last two decades this



effort has produced a considerable body of technical material (publications, slides and video programmes). Print copies are distributed free of charge to institutions dealing with disaster mitigation in member countries and electronic copies are also made available on the Internet for worldwide access. PAHO works at the highest level in member countries to ensure that disaster mitigation becomes an integral part of national disaster reduction programmes. Special programmes to develop technical guidelines and political support to vulnerability assessments and disaster mitigation for water systems and health services have been developed over the last decade.

PAHO has a letter of understanding with the ISDR Secretariat, in which both parties have agreed on a number of measures to strengthen cooperation in priority areas for the region, such as the publication of studies, joint lessons-learned exercises and the strengthening of the Regional Disaster Information Centre (CRID), a regional multi-organization consortium formed by the Coordinating Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPRENAC), Costa Rica's : National Risk Prevention and Emergency Response Commission (CNE), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), ISDR, Médecins sans frontières (MSF) and PAHO/WHO. PAHO, in collaboration with ISDR, is working on the implementation of a development plan for CRID in San José, Costa Rica. ISDR and PAHO have also agreed to increase access to disaster information, exchange and networking among countries and organizations in the region, through the joint support of CRID and national and subregional disaster information networks, including the Caribbean Disaster Information Network.

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● **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)**

Based in Geneva, Switzerland, WMO coordinates global scientific activity to allow increasingly prompt and accurate weather information and other services for public, private and commercial use. WMO activities contribute to the safety of life and property, the socio-economic development of nations and the protection of the environment.

WMO participated actively in the implementation of IDNDR and is now a member of the ISDR Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction. It supports the work of its working groups, in particular those on Climate and Disaster Reduction (for which it has lead responsibility), on Early Warning and on Vulnerability and Risk Assessment. The WMO constituent bodies, including the Congress and the Executive Council, follow and provide guidance on the policy, scientific and technical aspects of the implementation of ISDR objectives at the regional and global levels.

As nearly three-quarters of all natural disasters are related to weather and climate, WMO has a number of scientific and technical programmes related to the mitigation of natural disasters supported by the participation of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) and a number of Regional Specialized Meteorological Centres (RSMCs) worldwide. The WMO World Weather Watch (WWW) programme coordinates the preparation and distribution of weather, climate and hydrological data, analyses and forecast products to all nations. The WMO Tropical Cyclone Programme promotes the establishment of national and regionally coordinated systems to ensure effective preparedness so that the loss of life and damage caused by tropical cyclones and associated phenomena are reduced to a minimum. The WMO Public Weather Services (PWS) programme supports NMHSs in disaster reduction planning by providing a variety of routine forecasts and information to enhance the social and economic well-being of nations. The World Climate Programme (WCP) provides an authoritative

international scientific voice on climate, climate variations and climate change. WCP has provided advanced climate database management systems to many countries, with applications in several areas of disaster mitigation, especially drought. WMO continues to assist its members in the development of techniques to assess and combat drought, desertification and other extreme events through its agricultural meteorology programme. Through its leadership of the ISDR Working Group on Climate and Disaster Reduction, WMO contributes to the review of sectoral systems within and outside the United Nations that monitor climate sensitive emergencies. Of particular interest are the monitoring and prediction of climate-related natural disasters associated with the El Niño and La Niña phenomena. The World Weather Research Programme (WWRP) is aimed at developing improved and cost-effective techniques for forecasting high-impact weather and at promoting their applications among countries. The Hydrology and Water Resources Programme assists the national hydrological services of member countries to assess the risk of, and forecast, water-related hazards, in particular major floods and droughts.

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● The World Bank Group

The World Bank Group, based in Washington, D.C., United States, is one of the world's largest sources of development assistance. It works in more than 100 developing countries. The World Bank Group consists of five closely associated institutions, all owned by member countries that carry ultimate decision-making power. Each institution plays a distinct role in the mission to fight poverty. The term "World Bank" refers specifically to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Associa-

tion (IDA). IBRD provides loans and development assistance to middle-income countries and creditworthy poorer countries. It is not a profit-maximizing organization but has earned a net income every year since 1948, which is used to fund several developmental activities. The World Bank considers disaster reduction as an element in the fight against poverty linked to environmental management. In order to advance the goal of reducing the impact of disasters advocated by ISDR, the World Bank updated its strategies and procedures to promote proactive ways to integrate disaster prevention and mitigation into its development work.

IBRD, through its Disaster Management Facility (DMF), is a member of the Inter-agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction. DMF was established in July 1998 to promote disaster risk management as a priority issue for poverty reduction. DMF has worked actively to promote the integration of risk analysis into project design and the inclusion of effective prevention and mitigation measures into the Bank's Country Assistance Strategies. The staff has been trained to design safer investments empowering communities to reduce their vulnerability to disasters. Furthermore, disaster risk management is being mainstreamed into the Bank's development efforts. Reconstruction projects, such as those carried out in the aftermath of the earthquake in Turkey, of Hurricane Mitch in Central America and of the January 2001 earthquake in Gujarat, India, have been designed to go beyond mere rebuilding and to focus on how to rebuild in a better way to strengthen resilience to future disasters. Along the same lines, DMF pilot efforts are gradually being incorporated into Bank operations. A good example of this approach is in Mexico where, following a DMF case study to assess the capacity of the country to manage disaster risk, the Government requested the Bank to prepare a project aimed at reducing disaster losses.

The Bank is also working closely with its partners through the ProVention Consortium, which serves as mechanism for the various partners to combine efforts to gener-



ate evidence on the economic and financial impact of disasters on longer-term development, to develop methodologies and standards for conducting damage and needs assessments following a disaster, to strengthen communities' resilience to the impact of disasters and to identify innovations in risk transfer and financing.

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● International Labour Organization (ILO)

ILO is the United Nations agency specialized in matters related to labour and seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights. ILO is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

In 1999, to address the new trends characterized by globalization, socially and environmentally sustainable growth patterns and the consequence of economic reforms and structural adjustment in many developing countries, ILO established a special In-Focus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/Crisis) that concentrates on various types of crises including natural disasters.

The Programme is implementing the ILO Decent Work approach-emphasizing employment-to lay the foundations for crisis prevention, by promoting employment and creating the conditions for long-term reintegration, reconstruction, economic growth and socio-political stability. Activities of the Programme related to disaster reduction include:

- Knowledge development-ILO knowledge in crisis situations is continuously reviewed, updated and expanded with the latest data and analyses. Links are strengthened with ILO technical units and field offices, external research institutions and crisis practitioners worldwide;

- Tools development-Ready-made guidelines and standard packages to answer the specific needs of each individual crisis context and to steer rapid response action. These essential tools underpin effective work, especially in ILO areas of concern;
- Technical assistance-Direct interventions in emergencies are undertaken, for rapid needs assessment, programme development and implementation and to reduce the likelihood and inverse impact of future crises;
- Capacity-building-Capacity to respond effectively to crises is strengthened through wide dissemination of the above tools, along with training programmes and advisory services;
- Advocacy-A variety of activities promote national, subregional, regional and international recognition of the employment dimension and other ILO crisis concerns and its contribution to effective crisis management. They include awareness-raising workshops, presentations, publications, videos and public material;
- Resource mobilization-Efforts are made to mobilize resources internally and externally for timely interventions.

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● International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

ITU, with its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, is an international organization where governments and the private sector coordinate global telecommunication networks and services. ITU is a member of the ISDR Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction.

In 1994, the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Kyoto, following the Yokohama Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, emphasized the importance of telecommunications for disaster mitigation and disaster relief operations. In 1998, the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for

Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations was adopted by the Intergovernmental Conference on Emergency Telecommunications (ICET-98). It raised concerns about the impact of disasters on communication facilities and information flows. Unexpected natural and man-made disasters can occur anywhere, at any time. Rapid response to organize and coordinate recovery operations is essential to save lives and restore community infrastructure. Disaster recovery activities depend upon availability and access to telecommunication resources. However, telecommunication networks often experience severe stress during these events due to high traffic demands and infrastructure damage.

Against this background, ITU is working on the development of global standards to support an Emergency Telecommunications Service (ETS). Many dimensions need to be addressed in achieving an effective solution for emergency telecommunications including technical aspects as well as issues associated with user requirements, operational, policy, legal and regulatory aspects. Cooperation and liaison among the many interest areas are essential to ensure consistency and completeness in the provisioning of an effective emergency telecommunications capability. ITU is therefore engaging in the following activities:

- Study of the impact on telecommunications of disaster events;
- Identification of requirements/applications of emergency telecommunication users;
- Identification of types/modes of telecommunications for emergencies;
- Definition of the capabilities and priority aspects needed for emergency telecommunications;
- Identification of means of interchange of emergency data for distributed databases;
- Identification of specific types and sources of information needed to provide emergency telecommunication services, including the means of conveyance;
- Identification of security aspects for authentication of users and prevention of interference with ETS traffic;
- Identification of those dealing with various aspects (technical and other) related to emergency telecommunications.

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Other entities

● United Nations University (UNU)

UNU, with headquarters in Tokyo, Japan, comprises 13 research and training centres and programmes around the world and its partners include over 30 United Nations organizations and more than 100 research institutions globally. The overall mission of UNU is to contribute, through research and capacity-building, to efforts to resolve the pressing global problems that are the concern of the United Nations Member States.

With regard to disaster reduction, UNU has focused its activities in support of the ISDR goals in three main areas: firstly, the social aspects of urban vulnerability (a UNU initiative has been designed to highlight, produce and disseminate methodologies for the analysis of urban social vulnerability); secondly, disaster information and technologies (activities which have been carried out in partnership with the University of Tokyo's International Center for Disaster Mitigation-Engineering (INCEDE)); and thirdly, enhanced preparedness for climate-related disasters, which has always been a high priority area for the University.

A number of initiatives developed over the years to address these important global issues have made a significant contribution in linking the scientific community and the United Nations system. One particular example is the study on the El Niño phenomenon, which was carried out as a joint project between the ISDR secretariat, the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) (Boulder, Colorado, United States), UNEP, UNU and WMO. This activity, which included the work of multidisciplinary teams in 16 countries, led to findings that have been crucial to improving preparedness for the next El Niño occurrence and other climate-related disasters. As a follow-up to the El Niño project, UNU has developed a new Climate Affairs Programme, which will encompass a broad spectrum of issues ranging from ethics and policy

formulation to the impact of climatic phenomena. An important contribution of this initiative is the development of a multidisciplinary Climate Affairs Capacity Building Programme, which facilitates capacity development to meet disaster reduction challenges. Finally, UNU together with the University of Geneva and the Federal School of Lausanne have provided fellowships to postgraduate students from developing countries to attend the international course in analysis and management of geologic risk. UNU also participates in the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction as a member of the Working Group on Climate and Disasters.

UNU

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● United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

UNITAR is an autonomous body within the United Nations with a mandate to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations through training and research activities. Its headquarters are located in Geneva, Switzerland, where a majority of the UNITAR training and capacity-building programmes are organized. It also has a liaison office in New York.

UNITAR has provided training and project services for policy and institutional development. These activities have addressed risk issues in the areas of chemical and waste management, climate change, biodiversity, land degradation, environmental law, environmental negotiations, national reconstruction, the use of information systems and the involvement of local authorities. UNITAR conducted a programme in collaboration with several other United Nations organizations, local authorities, NGOs, universities and the private sector consisting in launching

an International Training Centre for Local Actors (CIFAL) in Divonne-les-Bains, France. This Centre provides a service structure, an international meeting location and an exchange of experiences open to all actors involved with sustainable development and international cooperation at the local level.

Recognizing the utility of geographic information systems and other modern information and communication technologies for advancing disaster reduction, UNITAR has been organizing training sessions in these fields since 1986 as well as several training activities related to disaster reduction. These include training

sessions for African civil servants working in the field of land degradation, workshops for local authorities in Crimea and Lebanon and additional workshops for national decision makers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and countries of the Southern Caucasus on the use of information systems for disaster reduction.

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Inter-agency mechanisms and common initiatives within the United Nations System

The ISDR Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction is the only platform within the United Nations system entirely dedicated to the coordination and policy setting of disaster reduction. The other inter-agency United Nations platforms and tools mentioned below complement and contribute to the promotion and efficient implementation of disaster reduction activities.

● United Nations System Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB)

Web site: www.ceb.unsystem.org

Membership:

United Nations Secretariat, ILO, FAO, UNESCO, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), WHO, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Universal Postal Union (UPU), ITU, WMO, International Maritime Organization (IMO), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNDP, UNEP, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), UNICEF, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), WFP, United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), UN-HABITAT.

CEB-formerly the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC)-chaired by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, is the forum that brings together the executive heads of all United Nations organizations to further coordination and cooperation on the whole range of substantive and management issues facing the United Nations system.

Since 1998 the former ACC had been regularly informed of the activities of IDNDR and subsequently of ISDR. It had periodically considered disaster reduction among its agenda items and had issued several statements on the importance of increased inter-agency coordination in this field. ISDR summary reports of the meetings of

the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction are circulated to CEB through its secretariat. Several members of CEB are permanent members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction. This provides a unique opportunity for strengthening coordination among agencies and organizations active in disaster reduction, humanitarian assistance and related development and environmental issues.

● ISDR Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction

Web site: www.unisdr.org

Membership:

United Nations system organizations: FAO, ITU, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, WFP, WHO, WMO, World Bank.

Non-UN organizations:

ADRC, African Union (AU), ADPC, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Interstate Council, Council of Europe EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, Drought Monitoring Centre (Nairobi), GFMC, Ibero-American Association for Civil Defense and Protection, IFRC, International Council for Science (ICSU), Munich Re, OAS/Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR), SOPAC.

Comprehensive information on the ISDR secretariat and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction can be found in the section on ISDR (see pages 19-20).

United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

Web site: www.dgo.org/

UNDAF constitutes a key component of

the United Nations Secretary-General's reform proposals adopted in 1997, to promote common objectives, time frames as well as improved collaboration between United Nations programmes and funds. It has been designed as the centrepiece of United Nations development cooperation at country level. UNDAF is primarily a United Nations instrument to respond strategically to countries' development challenges and to the United Nations global agenda. UNDAF is intended to strengthen the capacity of host Governments to implement their development programmes and strengthen their relations with the United Nations system. It is complemented with Common Country Assessments (CCAs), carried out between the agencies and the host country authorities. UNDAF and CCAs are therefore useful tools for the incorporation of disaster risk assessments and reduction measures into inter-agency assessment and action in a country.

● United Nations Development Group (UNDG)

Web site: www.undg.org

UNDG Executive Committee membership: UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP and other entities participating as warranted by their interests and mandates. The Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General and the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) participate in UNDG as observers.

UNDG members: DESA, UNDCP, UNHABITAT, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNCTAD, WHO, IFAD, UNESCO, FAO, the regional economic commissions, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

UNDG, chaired by the UNDP Administrator, provides a framework for greater coherence and cooperation in United Nations development operations. This

enables UNDG members to maximize their comparative advantages and build on and support the work of other members at the country level. As most of the UNDG members carry out activities towards disaster reduction (see previous pages of this section), this group represents an opportunity to integrate disaster reduction into other areas of concern, in particular sustainable development.

The DevLink web site, managed by UNDG, provides key documents, examples of good practice, training materials, sources of additional information and links to relevant United Nations and non-United Nations sites on UNDG areas of activity and in support of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the Secretary-General's reform programme, particularly CCAs and UNDAF.

● United Nations Disaster Management Training Programme (UNDMTP)

Web site: www.undmtp.org

Membership:

United Nations system agencies/organizations: FAO, IBRD, ILO, International Organization for Migration (IOM), OCHA, ISDR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNITAR, UNOPS, United Nations Staff College (UNSC), United Nations Volunteers (UNV), WFP, WHO, WMO.

Non-United Nations organizations: International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), IFRC, National Refugee Commission (NRC), Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR)

Under the management of UNDP, DMTP is an inter-agency tool shared to support capacity-building activities in the field of crisis and disaster management by undertaking training to meet the needs of government personnel, civil society groups, community leaders and partners in the



United Nations system. DMTP also provides training for in-country United Nations system Disaster Management Teams (DMT).

- **Disaster Management Teams**

DMT are established in countries where the United Nations system works, in different grades of formality, towards promoting coherence, coordination and information exchange among agencies in disaster-related matters and between the United Nations system and the host Government.

All relevant agencies with presence in the country are encouraged to participate in DMT.

UNDP, WFP, UNICEF, WHO (PAHO), FAO and UNESCO are the most commonly represented agencies in the Teams. While the spirit of DMT is to promote medium and long-term disaster reduction concerns in development planning to reduce vulnerability to natural or man-made hazards, the teams are however more active in the aftermath of disasters and serve as a coordinating mechanism to provide assistance for relief and recovery. In areas where similar natural disasters are recurrent, it is recommended that DMT embark systematically on preparedness programming as an exit strategy.

See: "The Role and Responsibilities of the UNDMTs" at the website www.undmtp.org

