



ANNOUNCEMENT

**Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
Second Session, Geneva, Switzerland
16 – 19 June 2009**

DISASTERS, POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY

Hyogo Framework for Action

The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters was adopted by 168 Governments at the World Conference for Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Japan in January 2005. The goal of the Hyogo Framework is to achieve a “substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in social, economic and environmental assets.” In adopting the Hyogo Framework, Governments committed to five priorities for action:

1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation;
2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risk and enhance early warning;
3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels;
4. Reduce the underlying risk factors;
5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

Since the adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action, there is a broader awareness of the importance of reducing disaster risk among a range of stakeholders in Government, non-governmental organizations, international financial institutions, the academic and scientific communities, the private sector, the media and the public at large. There have been dramatic changes globally in thinking and action on climate change, broadening the audience and increasing receptivity to the disaster risk reduction message.

Despite these positive trends, the gap between what needs to be done as envisaged in the Hyogo Framework and the reality at community level is stark, as witnessed by the devastating impact of the two major disasters which occurred in Asia in May 2008. Many megacities contain the seeds of major disasters waiting to happen. The poor and vulnerable continue to be the most affected when disaster strikes, both in rural and urban areas. And there remains a large gap between the resources needed for risk reduction – technical, human, institutional and financial - and what is currently available. These contradictions will be at the centre of the deliberations of the next session of the Global Platform.

ISDR System

The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction - ISDR - is a system of partnerships with the overall objective to generate and support a global disaster risk reduction movement. These partnerships are composed of a broad range of actors, all of which have essential roles to play in supporting nations and communities to reduce disaster risk. They include Governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, international financial institutions, scientific and technical bodies and specialized networks as well as civil society and the private sector. <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/isdr/>

Purpose of the Global Platform

The goal of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, as the main body of the ISDR system, is to sustain world-wide momentum to build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters. The Global Platform is convened by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in his capacity as Chair of the ISDR system. The Global Platform brings together a broad range of partners to assess progress made in implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, enhance awareness of disaster risk reduction, share experience and learn from good practice, identify remaining gaps as well as actions to accelerate national and local implementation.¹

The first session of the Global Platform, held in June 2007, was widely perceived by a range of stakeholders to have been an important milestone in the global movement to reduce risk to disasters triggered by natural hazards.

Date and Venue

The second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is scheduled to take place 16 – 19 June 2009 at the Centre International de Conférences de Genève (CICG) in Geneva, Switzerland. The venue will also be available for selected meetings and side events on Monday, 15 June 2009.

Participation

Participation in the Global Platform is by invitation from the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. John Holmes, in his capacity as Chair of the ISDR system.

All Member States of the United Nations will be invited to send representatives. Invitations will also be sent to concerned United Nations agencies, regional bodies and international financial institutions as well as representatives of civil society, the private sector and the scientific and academic communities. Organizations which received invitations to attend [the first session in June 2007](#) should expect again to receive an invitation to participate in the second session in June 2009.

Requests for participation by other expert organizations will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Given the nature and purpose of the Global Platform, participation is limited. Only organizations which have demonstrated a strong and continued engagement in disaster risk reduction and implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, including involvement in ISDR platforms, clusters and the working groups, and which have wide representation and outreach at international and/or regional level will be considered.

¹ General Assembly resolution A/RES/62/192, paragraph 15 (11 February 2008)

Programme of the second session

Thematic focus A major strategic challenge for all countries, but most particularly developing countries at high risk to disasters triggered by natural hazards, is to undertake sustainable development in such a way that risk to disasters is decreased, rather than increased as is all too often the case. This is largely because there is a lack of knowledge and understanding among the public at large, but also among policy and decision-makers, of the critical importance of positioning disaster risk reduction squarely in the sustainable development agenda. Mindful that it is generally the poor and vulnerable who suffer most, and most often during and following a disaster, the second session of the Global Platform is being organized under the theme: **‘Disasters, poverty and vulnerability’**

Plenary Sessions will provide the opportunity for participants to update their colleagues on challenges and opportunities from the perspectives of Governments and organizations active in risk reduction. Plenary sessions will also assess the state of global disaster risk and progress made in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action as well as identification of critical actions to accelerate national and local implementation.

Workshops will consist of technical discussions on thematic issues focusing on national and local implementation of disaster risk reduction. They will provide an opportunity for participants to exchange good practices, lessons learnt and provide guidance on various substantive and technical topics.

Positioning poverty and vulnerability at the centre of Hyogo Framework for Action implementation will be addressed by the workshops from several perspectives, such as people-centred early warning; examining how livelihoods and access to resources shape disaster risk; and risk transfer mechanisms and social protection.

Workshops will also consider how to ensure disaster risk reduction is included as a priority in public and private *investments* in order to substantially scale up the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. This will include protecting schools and hospitals from seismic risk; establishing institutional and legal frameworks and legislation to promote disaster risk reduction; and strengthening the role of women as agents of change to reduce disaster risk.

A Disaster Risk Reduction Marketplace will provide the opportunity to create linkages among participants for technical cooperation and mutual support. Booths will be made available which may be maintained by participants throughout the session. Specific times will also be set aside to allow participating Governments and organizations which wish to do so to make brief presentations on the practical methods, tools, products and capacities in disaster risk reduction which they offer.

Side Events will provide the opportunity for participating Governments and organizations to profit from the presence of a large number of colleagues from different sectors and points of view to address a broad range of issues. It is anticipated that side events will address issues such as community resilience and local governmental functions in reducing risk; the role of the private sector; and assessment of implementation of the Hyogo Framework from the perspective of non-governmental organizations.

More information on the agenda and timetable of the second session will be made available in November 2008.

Organization of the second session

The ISDR secretariat guides and supports the preparations for the Global Platform, under the overall leadership of United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. John Holmes (USG).

The preparations for the Global Platform constitute a true partnership among a range of stakeholders. There is a major role for Governments, both through the Geneva-based ISDR Support Group and by providing substantive inputs to the session, active participation in Regional Platforms, and provision of financial and in-kind support. Organizations which are members of various ISDR partnerships, including Regional Platforms and Thematic Platforms are also expected to contribute to the preparations. In addition, important contributions are made by networks of non-governmental organizations, the scientific and academic communities, the private sector and the media. Both Governments and organizations may take the leadership for preparations of specific substantive session workshops and side events. The UN/ISDR secretariat coordinates the various inputs.

Interpretation in the six official United Nations languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) will be available in the plenary and high-level panels. Most session workshops will be conducted in English, French and Spanish. Side events will take place in the language chosen by the organizer, normally English

It is anticipated that limited resources will be available to cover the participation of delegates from developing countries, particularly the least developed countries and small island developing states.

Contact information

For all enquiries about the second session please consult the website www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform which provides up-to-date information on the background, programme, organization of side events and the disaster risk reduction marketplace and other organizational matters. The website will also act as the portal to centralize, compile and disseminate session documents, inputs and contributions during the preparation phase. Queries on the preparations may also be made to the following e-mail address maintained by the ISDR secretariat: globalplatform@un.org. Tel: +41 22 017 8828. Fax: +41 22 917 8964.