

THIS WEEK AT THE GA

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR
FOR DISASTER REDUCTION (ISDR)

29 -31 OCTOBER 2007

SECOND COMMITTEE DEBATE

54 (c) "International Strategy for
Disaster Reduction "

Speakers

Bangladesh

Benin

CARICOM

China

Colombia

Cuba

Ecuador

Iran

Japan

Kuwait

Malawi

Malta

Monaco

Mozambique

Norway

Pakistan (on behalf of the G77)

Philippines

Portugal (on behalf of the EU)

Thailand

The Russian Federation

The United States

Sri Lanka

Uganda

Switzerland

Venezuela

Vietnam

Summary

During three consecutive days, the Second Committee of the General Assembly discussed a broad range of issues concerning *sustainable development*, including the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

Under-Secretary John Holmes, who introduced the Secretary-General's reports on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/62/320) and on the results of the Global Survey of the Early Warning System (A/62/320), mentioned that the overall context of the ISDR implementation is one of increasing disasters and disaster risk driven by climate change, as well as increased vulnerability to natural hazards and increasing concentration of urban settlement in high risk areas, such as seismic zones and coastal areas.

In this context, the urgency of implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action becomes more important than ever, said John Holmes. Despite some good progress made, the world is not on track to achieve the goals of the Hyogo Framework, which are essential to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

At present, 38 States have established national platforms for disaster risk reduction, and a total of 109 Governments have designated official focal points for the implementation, follow up and monitoring of the progress of the Hyogo Framework. Another important step in this regards was the realization of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which took place in Geneva in June and was attended by 1,150 participants. It provided a unique and committed forum to share and learn from good practices.

Highlights

Climate change, disaster risk reduction and environment

The **EU** urged for efforts to be taken to prepare communities for the effects of climate change through practical disaster reduction measures,

such as strengthened early warning systems, improved disaster preparedness, public awareness and education, sound land use planning and management of ecosystems, as well as safe building practices.

Switzerland emphasized the need to integrate disaster risk reduction, including ecosystems management and climate change adaptation into sustainable development and poverty reduction programmes. **Mozambique** appreciated the UN efforts in searching ways to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters. It stressed the need for universal access to all relevant information and services for disaster management, particularly to assist developing countries in their efforts to develop their capacity to reduce the risks from disasters and to adapt to the climate change. The representative of **CARICOM** emphasized the importance of building resilience and stressed the need for an integrated approach to development planning taking into account environmental risks. She expressed appreciation for the capacity building initiatives of UNDP and UNEP in the region. She added that given the extreme degree of vulnerability of the Caribbean region to climate change, efforts are underway to mainstream adaptation in development.

Disaster risk reduction, MDGs and poverty reduction

Pakistan on behalf of **G77**, recalled the Hyogo Framework and emphasized the need for a full implementation of its provisions aimed at building the resilience of nations and communities to disaster. According to the G77 the social and economic impact of disasters have become greater due to rapid population growth, especially in urban areas, environmental degradation as well as growing poverty. **Uganda** said that any progress made towards achieving the MDGs is quickly reversed by the impact of disasters. In particular, the economic and social impacts of floods are a big setback to development while the burden of the losses will continue to challenge governments for years to come. **Mozambique** and **Indonesia** said that the reduction of vulnerability to natural disasters constitutes an important element for the sustained development, and stressed the economic, social and environmental costs, which severely constrain the achievement of the MDGs. In this context, there is a need for more decisive, sustained and systematic action for risk reduction through an acceleration of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework as well as a strengthening of national and local capacities.

National Platforms, Plans and Strategies – Mainstreaming

Ecuador reaffirmed its commitment to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework at the national and local level, in particular through the establishment of a national platform for disaster risk reduction. **Mozambique** reported that a Natural Disaster, Prevention and Mitigation Master Plan was adopted last year, which draws the main strategic lines to mitigate the prevalence of disasters and define a 10 year action programme. **Malawi** has placed the issue of disaster risk reduction high on its development agenda, in response to the Hyogo Framework, and implemented disaster risk reduction mainstreaming activities through its Department for Poverty and Disaster Management Affairs. The **Philippines** have included mitigation and prevention of disasters as one of the five major priorities under its medium term development plan 2004-2010.

Early Warning Systems – Information and Communications technologies

EU welcomed the conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on the Survey of the Global Early Warning Systems, on how to advance the development of global early warning system capacities for all natural hazards. **Colombia, China** and **Benin** emphasized the importance of early warning systems as important components of disaster reduction strategies. **Thailand** said that preventive measures, including early warning systems and knowledge building are vital. Thailand has put 10 million US dollars into the Multi-Donor Voluntary Trust Fund for Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements in the Indian Ocean and South-east Asia or Tsunami regional Trust Fund, as to establish early warning system for the region. **CARICOM** said that the development and transfer of technologies for the purpose of disaster risk reduction and management and new and renewable sources of energy are of great interest to CARICOM Member States. Information and communication technologies have always been recognized as an important dimension of disaster management in the Caribbean.

Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

Several countries, including **EU, Iran, China, Vietnam, Switzerland** and **USA**, referred to the Global Platform for Disaster Reduction as the main global forum of the strengthened ISDR system and for monitoring progress on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework. **Russia** said that Global Platform is "an appropriate arena to continue non political dialogue" on disaster reduction and **Japan** said it was encouraged by its establishment. **Ecuador** welcomed the results of the first session of the Global Platform and said that the work of ISDR and implementation of the Hyogo Framework have been strengthened, in particular in terms of better coordination among all stakeholders.

Funding – Support – Capacity building

The **Group 77** and **China** called for developed countries to assist developing countries through support, the provision of resources as well as capacity building in order to be better prepared for forthcoming natural disasters. They also urged their development partners to help developing countries to set regulations which are appropriate, in order to materialize the five priority areas of the Hyogo Framework. **China** said that it was important to ensure long term stable and predictable core funding for disaster reduction and also that the support to the CERF should be strengthened. **Indonesia** said that despite worldwide commitment to increase efforts, the world seems to be lagging behind. For this reason, there is a need to redouble our efforts. It is important to strengthen national capacities, invest in disaster risk reduction and have predictable and stable financial resources for international instruments related to disaster reduction. **CARICOM** called upon the United Nations and the international community to increase support for these efforts, including those being coordinated by the CARICOM Climate Change Centre, through the provision of new additional and predictable financial and technical resources

Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery

Several countries, such as **Russia, Vietnam, US and EU** welcomed the Global Facility as an important step that supports the implementation of the Hyogo Framework through a comprehensive approach by joining forces among different stakeholders.