Draft Concept Note
ECOSOC AMR Innovation Forum
1-3 July 2013, Palais des Nations, Geneva

1. Overview of up to 500 words describing the initiative and how it relates to the overall theme of science, technology, innovation and culture for the MDGs.

Tangible Earth (GfT) App

It fulfills a prediction nearly 50 years ago for a computer system capable of monitoring the planet in real-time – the "Tangible Earth" tool.

With the touch of a finger, users of a new tool for disaster risk communication, launched at the Fourth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva, can access real-time weather data or check historical disaster patterns. The tool, known as "GAR for Tangible Earth" because its main digital interface is a touch-sensitive rendering of the globe, uses earth science data from the 2013 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR13), released on 15 May by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

Tablet computer users can download the application for free from iTunes. By scanning QR-coded icons that represent the subjects covered by the report, they can browse data directly and access a wide array of functionalities, from risk scenario design to modelling and projections. Users can, for example, request hourly weather updates or query the probability of seismic events for a given region. They can also make correlations between such phenomena as continental drift, El Niño, global warming and the growth of megacities.

The application, developed by the Earth Literacy Program in Japan, is open-source, using a common graphic language accessible to any number of data sources, such as national weather agencies. Its launch in Geneva on 21 May, marks a new stage in an ongoing collaboration between UNISDR and the application's developers. It places science and technology at the service of disaster risk reduction — one of the key messages of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction that met from 19 to 23 May, 2013.

A heuristic, cognitive tool, Tangible Earth has applicability in the classroom, to impart the lesson on students that the Earth is a dynamic system that changes over time. It is accessible to everyday people to inform their decisions as they go about their daily lives.

For the ECOSOC AMR Implementation Forum, UNISDR would like to showcase the GAR for Tangible Earth, through its App for iPad. Tablet computer and smart phone users can enjoy the free GfT App by downloading it from iTunes. The GAR for Tangible Earth is a fully interactive stand-alone application, which features a 3D globe interface that contains decades of dynamic earth science data sets, including disaster events from GAR13 and past Global Assessment Reports – GAR07, GAR09 and GAR11. These data sets are

illustrated with interactive risk scenarios, maps and photos and are searchable by time (including real-time), place, risk driver, hazard, disaster event, and more.

The Tangible Earth was first released in prototype in 2002, and exhibited to great acclaim in 2005 at the World Expo 2005 in Aichi, Japan. It has the potential to change the nature of interaction between nations and international organizations and facilitate cooperation.

"A globe connected around the planet, turned together by brothers and sisters educating each other" is the vision that inspires the Tangible Earth. According to its creator, Professor Shinichi Takemura, "We want to surpass the idea of just being a near real-time interactive tool for studying the Earth's environment, and function as a public platform for developing planetary sensibilities, in an era that where such understandings are nothing if not critical."

A short note on GAR13: GAR13 analysis is built on new data that includes reviews of national disaster loss data bases in 40 countries, survey responses from 1,300 SMEs in disaster-prone locations in the Americas, and a review of risk management in 14 major corporations including ABB, ARUP, BG Group, Citigroup, General Electric, HCC Group, HIRCO Group, Hitachi Group, InterContinental Hotels Group, Nestlé, NTT East Corporation, Roche, Shapoorhi Pallonji&Co. Ltd., and Walmart.

GAR13 and its associated products and videos can be accessed via:
www.preventionweb.net/gar/

2. At least one photo (horizontal preferred) to accompany your text.
http://www.flickr.com/photos/isdr/8786512874/

3. A caption (one sentence) to accompany the photo, and photo credit (if necessary).
Professor Shinichi Takemura demonstrating the Tangible Earth (Photo credit: UNISDR)

4. Multimedia submissions of additional photos and brief related videos, can be found here:
http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/2013/en/home/media.php

5. Links to social media accounts (twitter, facebook, youtube) if applicable can be found here:

https://twitter.com/unisdr
https://www.facebook.com/UNISDR
http://www.youtube.com/unisdr