

PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES INFORMATION SHEET

Name of the Partnership/Initiative

Integrating early warning and disaster risk management into the sustainable development agenda and practice

Expected date of initiation:

The ISDR Partnership initiative will be formally initiated during the third quarter of 2002. It is envisioned that work on each of the activities/targets will commence during the fourth quarter of 2002 and the first quarter of 2003.

Expected date of completion:

As discussed in detail below, each Partnership Initiative activity will have its own timeframe for completion; for some, success will not be measured by a date of completion but by sustained behavior change over time. Some activities will have measurable results early on, for example the convening of convene thematic meetings, while the results of others will only be measurable over the course of months and years. While results of the Partnership Initiative will be measurable within one year's time, the initiative is seen as a five-year program.

Partners Involved:

Governments: Government of Germany (invited), Government of Ecuador (invited), Government of Switzerland (invited), Government of New Zealand (invited)

Intergovernmental organizations:

The United Nations ISDR Secretariat, The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) (invited), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (invited), the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) (invited), the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), and the UNEP/OCHA Environmental Emergencies Section.

Major Groups: The German Committee for Disaster Reduction (DKKV), The Drought Monitoring Centre (Nairobi), the UK Advisory Committee for Natural Disaster Reduction, the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) (invited), the International Research Institute (IRI) (invited)

Leading Partner:

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Main objectives of the Partnership/Initiative

Please provide a brief description:

The main objective of the Partnership Initiative is to strengthen existing early warning systems as an element for disaster risk management strategies at global, regional and national levels and to highlight their important relation to sustainable development.

Please also provide a brief description of the relationship of the Partnership/Initiative with the objectives of Agenda 21 as well as relevant goals and objectives of the United Nation Millennium Declaration:

There is a growing recognition among many countries that natural disasters increasingly constitute a threat to sustainable development. The impact of natural disasters on increasingly vulnerable societies not only deprives gains in development but also constitutes a significant obstacle to the attainment of key goals identified in the UN Millennium declaration in 2000, in particular those related to environmental protection and poverty reduction.

To ensure the implementation of the ISDR, the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction was established and identified the issue of early warning as a priority area for its future work. Consequently, activities relating to early warning, including the development of better-coordinated global practices and more effective use of early warning systems as a means of promoting disaster reduction, have assumed increased importance in the context of the implementation of the ISDR.

Throughout the process of preparing for the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) early warning has received significant attention and the references are many. In general, the WSSD has called for the inclusion of disaster and risk reduction, especially the development and strengthening of early warning systems and information networks, within the ongoing dialogue of sustainable development.

The guidelines and recommendations endorsed by the WSSD are those that have been developed in the framework of the ISDR, and in response to a specific request by the United Nations General Assembly.

These recommendations include improving the affordable access to disaster-related information for early warning purposes, particularly at the local level. In considering examples of where increased attention is needed, the WSSD agreed there was a need to “develop and strengthen capacity at all levels to collect and disseminate scientific and technical information, including the improvement of early warning systems for prediction of extreme weather events, especially El Niño/La Niña, through the provision of assistance to institutions devoted to addressing such events, including the International Centre for the Study of the El Niño Phenomenon” currently being established in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

It also identifies the need to “integrate measures to prevent and combat desertification as well as to mitigate the effects of drought through relevant policies and programmes, such as land, water and forest management, agriculture, rural development, early warning systems, environment, energy, natural resources, health and education, and poverty eradication and sustainable development strategies,” and to “provide affordable local access to information to improve monitoring and early warning related to desertification and drought.”

While calling out the need to respond to community needs, it also highlighted the importance of focusing on a larger than national scale when it identified the need to provide financial and technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of African countries. WSSD organizers also stress the need to include local-level institutional and human capacity in such areas as observation and early warning systems, assessments, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Further, and specifically, the recent WSSD PrepCom calls on all relevant parties to “strengthen the role of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and encourage the international community to provide the necessary financial resources to its Trust Fund.”

Expected results:

Please provide a brief description:

All activities convened as part of the Partnership Initiative will be expected to develop their programs using proven and successful policies and “best practices” and, where none exist, to put emphasis, when possible and appropriate, on developing and promoting new methodologies and guidelines that can be standardized for transfer to other sectors and in other regions. Each partnership target and associated activities, will be expected to convene thematic meetings to facilitate discussions on such issues as:

- Vulnerability and risk assessments, based on standardized methodologies
- Elaboration of guidelines to design effective early warning systems focusing on, and
- Capacity building and awareness

Specific targets of the Partnership/Initiative and timeframe for their achievement:

The partnership will have three principal targets, each to be met through the conduct of partnership activities. It is anticipated that measurable results toward meeting the targets will be seen within 1-5 years (see below). Each activity will have its own timeframe for completion; for some, success will not be measured by a date of completion but by sustained behavior change over time. Some activities will have measurable results early on, for example the convening of convene thematic meetings, while the results of others will only be measurable over the course of months and years.

Target 1: Within 3-5 years produce measurable results of an improvement in the awareness of vulnerable communities to the hazards to which they are exposed and the related effects of those hazards on sustainable development.

Examples of activities include:

- Partnering with regional agencies, national governments and local community stakeholders to integrate into local risk management plans the results of local community-level risk analysis and the design of appropriate communication and disaster preparedness strategies. These plans should include both early warning system components, as well as broad actions for hazard mitigation, vulnerability reduction and sustainable development.
- Partnering with national and regional agencies, and using participatory training methodologies that are already in existence (such as those produced in Latin America, Asia and Africa) develop training programs for local community disaster management authorities in risk management and in the design and implementation of disaster preparedness and communication strategies that can be adapted easily to early warning requirements.
- Partnering with national institutions, academia and the private sector – via global regional and national Internet-based, moderated forums – to discuss the pros and cons of using the Internet and other electronic media as outlets for early warning information

Target 2: Within 1-5 years to show measurable results toward strengthening capacities, at all levels, to collect and disseminate scientific and technical information with the objective of improving early warning systems for prediction of natural hazards, including medium- to long-term early warning systems of climate related weather extremes.

Examples of activities include:

- Partnering with governments, UN agencies, professional associations, and other relevant groups to establish a web-based clearinghouse on early warning through which dialogue between and among interested parties would be encouraged and sustained, and timely access by parties seeking credible information would be ensured.
- Partnering with governments' UN agencies, International Organizations and other relevant parties to convene an international forum on early warning as it relates to sustainable development, to call attention to existing early warning systems and disaster risk management strategies.
- Partnering with relevant parties to assist institutions devoted to addressing medium- to long-term early warning systems for prediction of extreme weather events, including the International Centre for the Study of the El Niño Phenomenon” currently being established in Guayaquil, Ecuador
- Partnering with agencies of the UN, and international, regional and national governments and organizations, conduct periodic reviews of global and regional

early warning capacities within their individual and collective areas of responsibility and utilize those results to develop or update plans for overall improvements in warning capacity. Where possible, these reviews should be based on existing information and should examine:

- The effectiveness of existing coordination mechanisms among international agencies, together with, and between, individual national scientific and technical agencies responsible for early warning;
 - The effectiveness of international telecommunications infrastructure for the timely relay of warnings and data to threatened populations, to national institutions responsible for domestic warning programs and to international humanitarian and emergency assistance agencies;
 - The adequacy of internationally coordinated observational networks to support early warning programs;
 - The roles, responsibilities and operational performance of specialized warning centers to ensure their effectiveness in responding to early warning needs within their respective areas of responsibility; and
 - International training and technical assistance programs to ensure that they are targeting the areas of highest priority from an early warning perspective.
- Partnering with libraries and library associations to develop an interconnected “network” of repositories of local early warning and other disaster reduction information.

Target 3: Within 1-3 years to show a demonstrable increase and active involvement of new and under-heard voices in the early warning dialogue to ensure civil early warning programs are developed with an accurate understanding of the particular needs that must be considered to protect all members of society.

Examples of activities include:

- Developing specific programmes to enhance and strengthen the role of women in managing disaster reduction processes, including the development of early warning systems at all levels.
- Partnering with religious leaders and institutions to develop a dialogue leading to new ways in which disaster managers and the clergy can work collaboratively to improve community awareness and compliance with early warning programs.
- Partnering with traditionally “undeserved” and most-vulnerable populations (incl. children, elderly, disabled), to ensure early warning programs are developed with an accurate understanding of how to meet their needs.

Coordination and Implementation mechanism

Please provide a brief description of expected coordination/implementation mechanism of

the Partnership/Initiative.

The United Nations Inter-agency Secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction will act as the coordination body for the partnership and its governance. The work programme will be developed jointly by the partners.

Activities will be undertaken with collaborating organisations, 'ownership' of specific initiatives products/services will be attributed according to specific commitments to maintain these products.

The Inter-agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) through the Working Group 2 on Early Warning led by UNEP, will be the principal audience of the partnership on 'Integrating early warning and disaster risk management into the sustainable development agenda and practice', to receive reports of activities, and it will also provide policy guidance to the activities.

Arrangements for funding

Please describe available and/or expected sources of funding for the implementation of the Partnership/Initiative (e.g. donor government(s); international organization(s)/financial institution(s); foundation(s); private sector; other major groups, etc.)

To accomplish these important objectives will require energy, enthusiasm, expertise, commitment and a willingness to listen to voices both familiar and new. It also requires financial support and, therefore, specific projects should be formulated to submit to donor agencies (bilateral and multilateral).

Funding for the partnership is currently provided by the ISDR Trust Fund. Additional core funding is expected from the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Ecuadorian Government is providing resources for related activities, through a joint Ecuadorian Government/WMO Trust Fund for CIIFEN. Other resources (funding and in-kind) are expected from parties committed to this initiative, in particular from Governments, Intergovernmental Organization and Major Groups mentioned in this proposal. The private sector will also be approached, for coordination and exchange purposes as well as active participation.

Arrangements for capacity building and technology transfer

Please include information if the Partnership/Initiative provides for training, informational support, institutional strengthening and/or other capacity building measures:

At the core of the Partnership Initiative is the objective to identify and promote “best practices” and, as stated earlier, where none exist, to put emphasis on developing and promoting new methodologies and guidelines that can be standardized for transfer. To be successful at this, Partnership activities will have capacity building* at the top of the list of priorities.

Vulnerable communities must be aware of the hazards to which they are exposed and the related effects of those hazards. Citizens must be able to take specific actions themselves to minimize their personal threat of loss or damage. In this respect, there should not be total reliance on the frequently overtaxed public sector. Local communities should have sufficient familiarity with the

hazards to which they are exposed, and an understanding of advisory information received, to be able to advise, instruct and engage the population in a manner that increases their safety or reduces the possible loss of resources on which the community depends.

In order to foster this capability, energy and resources must be devoted to the development of local community level capacities to plan and act. Capacity-building at the local community level requires the development of all warning sub-systems including:

- Monitoring and forecasting of local level hazards;
- High resolution risk analysis on the basis of local knowledge and intelligence;
- Disaster preparedness strategies appropriate to specific vulnerable groups; and
- Communication strategies enabling timely warning information to reach targeted vulnerable groups.

Rapid, low-cost, methodologies for risk analysis at the local level have been developed and documented examples of their application exist in a number of countries. The Partnership Initiative will work with national, regional and international disaster management agencies to ensure access these methodologies and their transference to all levels where needed. A priority in the development of local level early warning systems should be to train local disaster management authorities in the use of appropriate methodologies and then follow with technical assistance for the development of local level risk information sub-systems.

Training programs will also be developed for local community disaster management authorities in risk management and in the design and implementation of disaster preparedness and communication strategies. They need to build on documented experience of successful practice from different countries and contexts. Participatory training methodologies produced in Latin America, Asia and Africa already exist that can be adapted easily to early warning requirements.

The results of local community-level risk analysis and the design of appropriate communication and disaster preparedness strategies need to be integrated into local risk management plans. These plans should include both early warning system components, as well as broad actions for hazard mitigation and vulnerability reduction. These plans should clearly define the institutional and decision-making responsibilities for early warning. They should be formulated and updated regularly with the participation of key local community stakeholders. Plans should also include options for simulating contingencies, in order to verify the effectiveness of proposed responses. This will also help ensure broad based public awareness and participation in developing risk management strategies.

With respect to international and regional coordination of capacity building, the primary focus of upgrading national capacities must be placed where the highest priority needs exist, as this will result in the best contribution to improving overall early warning capacity at the regional and global levels. The Partnership Initiative will encourage responsible regional and international organizations to undertake regular reviews of global and regional early warning capacities within their individual and collective areas of responsibility and utilize those results to develop or update plans for overall improvements in warning capacity. Where possible, these reviews will be based on existing information and will examine:

- The effectiveness of existing coordination mechanisms among international agencies, together with, and between, individual national scientific and technical agencies responsible for early warning;
- The effectiveness of international telecommunications infrastructure for the timely relay of warnings and data to threatened populations, to national institutions responsible for domestic warning programs and to international humanitarian and emergency assistance agencies;
- The adequacy of internationally coordinated observational networks to support early warning programs;
- The roles, responsibilities and operational performance of specialized warning centers to ensure their effectiveness in responding to early warning needs within their respective areas of responsibility; and
- International training and technical assistance programs to ensure that they are targeting the areas of highest priority from an early warning perspective.

In this respect, donor countries and international agencies should continue to assist governments to develop their national capacities. This may be accomplished by means of training and human resource development programmes, the provision of technological assistance, by encouraging research about local conditions, by facilitating greater access to research results developed elsewhere and by implementing early warning demonstration projects. It is equally important to increase opportunities for scientific and technical experience to be taken into consideration in the determination of policy and decision making processes that shape hazard monitoring and disaster prevention activities.

Finally, while hydrometeorological, geological and technological hazards must receive their just attention; other hazards that are perhaps not as well known or as well understood must also receive attention. Representative of these lesser-explored issues are fire hazards, the El Niño/La Niña phenomena, and the forecasting of emerging and other communicable disease outbreaks.

* “Early Warning Programme Action Plan for the Future”, IDNDR Programme Forum, July 1999, IDNDR.

Links of Partnership/Initiative with on-going sustainable development activities at the international and/or regional level (if any)

Please provide a brief description:

- Partnering between the climate information networks and sectoral early warning capacities to improve medium- to long-term early warning system of climate related weather extremes.
- Partnering with governments UN agencies, International Organizations and other relevant parties to convene an international forum on early warning as it relates to sustainable development, to call attention to existing early warning systems and disaster risk management strategies.

- Partnering with governments, UN agencies, professional associations, and other relevant groups to establish a web-based clearinghouse on early warning through which dialogue between and among interested parties would be encouraged and sustained, and timely access by parties seeking credible information would be ensured.
- Partnering with national institutions, academia and the private sector – via global regional and national Internet-based, moderated forums – to discuss the pros and cons of using the Internet and other electronic media as outlets for early warning information.

Monitoring Arrangements

Please describe expected arrangements for monitoring of progress in the implementation of Partnerships/Initiative after it will be launched at the WSSD: (e.g. frequency/modalities of preparation of progress reports; electronic updates, news-letters, etc)

Partnership Initiative updates and reporting on activities of interest will be featured regularly in ISDR press bulletins and in other regular publications such as IDNDR Informs. As discussed elsewhere in this document, it is also a primary objective of ISDR to facilitate regional (and inter-regional) and sectoral (and inter-sectoral) forums for the discussion of issues pertinent to the Partnership Initiative mission. The outcomes of these discussions will also be widely shared and publicized

Other relevant information:

Web-site (if available): www.unisdr.org

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