

The German Committee to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

- Disaster vulnerability, organization and activities of
the German IDNDR-Committee -

Introduction

By Resolution 44/236 of 22 December 1989 the United Nations General Assembly designated the 1990's as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). IDNDR is the 13th decade adopted by the United Nations after the Second World War. Among the previous Decades were the Decade for Women, for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, etc..

Resolution 44/236 provides an overall programme for the reduction of disaster vulnerability as well as the establishment of national IDNDR Committees in each country. On an initiative of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs the German IDNDR Committee has been set up in September 1989. The Committee comprises development and disaster relief organizations, private companies, science and research institutions as well as media and politicians.

1. Legal Form and Structure of the German IDNDR-Committee

The German IDNDR-Committee has been founded as a private organization without legal capacity. The Committee is constituted by different private member organization and members "ad personam". Representatives of various Ministries are invited to the meetings of the Committee as guests. Some member organizations, due to their political and financial dependency on public funds, can be considered as being semigovernmental organizations and ensuring governmental influence on the Committee. This influence becomes also evident through the financing of Committee activities by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to the experience of the two first years the private organizational structure of the Committee has turned out to be efficient. The private status and the simultaneous backing of the committee by the government guarantee a relatively flexible radius of action. Extracts of the association's statutes have been published in the brochure of the German IDNDR Committee.

The composition of the German IDNDR Committee has recently been reshaped and is now integrating private companies and disaster relief and development agencies as well. The Committee is at present composed of 28 members. 9 members belong to the field of disaster relief and development assistance and further 9 to science and research. The German Weather Service, which - in cooperation with the WMO - is executing important projects in the field of early warning systems can be regarded as a member of the first group. The German Space Agency (DARA) promotes satellite projects in the context of early warning. The German Red Cross, the Federal Institute for the Technical Aid Service (a civil defense organization)