

Scientific and Technical Committee; heads of insurance companies, environmental organizations, scientific research institutes, a disaster research institute, the Red Cross and other businesses and NGOs.

Chile

The National Emergency Office of Chile (ONEMI), the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) organized the "First Latin

American Conference on Local Governments and Organizations Confronting Disasters and Emergencies" (10-12 April, Santiago) Over 160 representatives from local governments, national Red Cross societies, community leaders and Civil Defense representatives, and international organizations attended.

The IDNDR Regional Office, which helped organize the conference, launched the Cities at Risk campaign and distributed materials. Key groundwork took place for the Virtual Internet Conference "Solutions for Cities at Risk", which contributed to high quality and strong participation from Latin America in the Internet Conference. Some case studies presented were used for the IDNDR Cities at Risk publication.

The Santiago Declaration emphasizes that urban development planning should include risk reduction measures, that NGOs in educational programmes should have a greater role, and that

municipalities should encourage community involvement in disaster prevention activities.

The regional results were integrated in a global meeting in Amsterdam on the same subject, held in late April.

School safety exercises and drills were carried out in many schools across the country, as part of the World Disaster Reduction Day.

By government decree in 1991, 10 October is National Civil Protection Day. The objective is to promote a "new culture of disaster prevention" among the public at large.

The Director of the National Emergency Office (also IDNDR National Committee coordinator and new IDNDR STC member) issued press releases and gave media interviews about "Solutions for Cities at Risk", based on the messages prepared by IDNDR.

In Santiago, the capital, a major emergency drill was carried out on October 17, simulating a chemical disaster, to examine operational coordination capacities. 500 persons from different institutions participated, as well as 5,000 volunteers.

The month-long campaign ended with an international seminar "Disasters, Environment and Development" organized by ONEMI. National and international organizations participated and City at Risk publications were distributed. The main topic for discussion was how to followup the city theme.

One major followup action has been a new programme called "The community participates actively in local planning and security." Launched in March, several newspapers have reported on it. "Historically, emergency planning in Chile has been carried out within an office", said the head of Chile's National Emergency Office. "Today we want communities".

China

The Ministry for Civil Affairs (IDNDR National Committee) organized a series of three meetings from September to November focusing on disaster reduction and development in Chinese cities. Hundreds of high-level officials from government departments, city authorities and universities attended each event, for example the Vice-Minister for Civil Affairs and the Vice-



Mayor of Beijing. Also, in October, two scientific meetings were held with government officials and other organizations dealing with disaster preparedness.

On World Disaster Reduction Day, 10 Government agencies of the Fujian province (more than 30 million citizens) mobilized 100,000 people to distribute disaster prevention information

China's megacities and 31 cities with over one million citizens suffer from a wide range of disasters every year. In 1996, floods caused the most damage, followed by drought, earthquakes, windstorms and landslides. Nearly 50 million acres of crops were affected, 8 million houses collapsed, and over 12 million people were transferred due to disasters. 20 million people were besieged by floods alone. In one of the major urban disasters in the last 20 years, the Tangshan earthquake in 1976 killed 81,000 people in Tangshan City seriously damaged more than 80% of houses and industrial buildings.

Colombia

The National System for Natural Disaster Reduction dedicated the month of November to activities for the World Disaster Reduction Campaign. November marks the anniversary of the eruption of volcano Nevada del Ruiz, which wiped out the town of Armero 11 years ago, killing 25,000.

The National System for Natural Disaster Reduction organized many meetings on disaster prevention for community



leaders, school officials, its own committees, fire brigades and the staff of Colombia's National Parks.

Throughtout

November, the National System for Natural Disaster Reduction, Civil Defense and the Colombian Red Cross organized 43 courses on disaster management throughout the country.

The National System for Natural Disaster Reduction distributed 29,000 copies of a family emergency plan for children as a contribution to the IDNDR campaign.



They also organized a workshop for children in the community of Armero-Guyabal on "The Protection of Life", emphasizing disaster prevention.

10,000 IDNDR - Colombian Disaster Reduction stickers were distributed along with 10,000 copies of the story "The Protection of Life". They also provided schools with 50,000 comic-book style posters on five natural hazards.

Costa Rica

The Ministry of Health announced its new plan of action for urban disaster mitigation in the press on the World Disaster Reduction Day. After examining selected buildings in San José, the Health Ministry and the Municipality of San José expressed concern that buildings like shopping malls, sport stadiums and discotheques might not be safe in case of an earthquake and hurricanes. San José citizens were called upon to join local emergency committees to improve their emergency preparedness capacity.

The IDNDR Regional Office supported the University of Costa Rica's Geology department and another ten national and multilateral organizers to hold its fourth regional seminar on "Geological Risks in Urban Areas"