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# **Internet Conference “Solutions for Cities at Risk”**

## **As part of the 1996 World Disaster Reduction Day Campaign on “Cities at Risk”**

**S**olutions for Cities at Risk is a conference which took place on the Internet. It was co-organised by the Secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (United Nations) and by Quipunet, an NGO which organises conferences on the Internet. The conference took place over two months (Sept. to Oct. 1996) via electronic mail and on the World Wide Web (<http://www.quipu.net/risk/>). It was followed by a public evaluation phase (Nov. to Dec. 1996).

The conference aimed to discuss experiences and share information on natural disaster management in cities.

Eight themes were discussed for one week each. A different moderator was responsible for introducing each theme and drawing conclusions on it.

The conference attracted 465 participants from 56 countries. About 75% of them represented global and regional institutions, government authorities, NGOs, development agencies, banks, city organisations, and independent consultants. The remaining 25% represented universities and research institutes. About 80% of the participants were new IDNDR partners. Heavy bilateral networking is being reported back to the Secretariat. The first results of the evaluation phase generally show a high level of satisfaction amongst the conference participants.

The formal conference is now over. But the group email list is still used by participants for announcements, and all conference material can be viewed on the Web. The information in this leaflet explains how the conference can continue to be used for networking, policy development and research for case examples, to help find solutions for cities at risk.

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### **Conference Programme**

(September-October 1996)

#### **Week 1: Plenary Session**

- ▶ Opening speeches. Recent conference conclusions on the subject of cities at risk. Lessons learned from recent internet exchanges on disaster mitigation.

#### **Week 2: Disaster Management Scenarios**

- ▶ What would happen if a major disaster hit your city? “Risk assessments” and “vulnerability assessments” can help determine the potential impact of disasters. But do cities take appropriate actions based on the results? Sometimes results are not communicated in a way that is clear to local authorities. Disaster management scenarios are a way to make these results convincing for local authorities.

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### **Week 3: Case Studies in Community Involvement**

- ▶ A first look at how community groups are involved in reducing the impact of disasters.

### **Week 4: Telecommunications and Early Warning**

- ▶ What is the role of telecommunications in disaster mitigation?
- ▶ What successful examples of early warning for urban areas can be adapted to other cities?

### **Week 5: Planning**

- ▶ Successes and constraints for city emergency planning issues.

### **Week 6: Design, Engineering, Construction, Maintenance**

- ▶ Making buildings and infrastructure safer – including homes, schools, health facilities and other key community buildings.

### **Week 7: The Role of Universities**

- ▶ What are universities doing about urban disaster mitigation? What should they be doing? How can city authorities, donors, and NGOs work optimally with local universities?

### **Week 8: More on Community Involvement**

- ▶ Examples from participants about successful examples of community involvement that can be adapted elsewhere.

### **Week 9: Environmental Degradation and Urban Risks**

- ▶ Examples on the links between sustainable development practices and urban risk management.

### **Evaluation period**

(November-December 1996)

- ▶ An evaluation form on the conference was sent out to the participants after the end of the conference. Answers to the evaluation form are still reaching the Secretariat. The

analysis of the data is currently underway. The results of the conference evaluation will be included in the production of the conference proceedings which, pending on funding, will be published later this year.

### **How You May Use The Conference Results...**

#### **Access to valuable information on cities, emergency and vulnerability reduction**

The actual conference might be over, but the conference sites will remain open through 1997. All the conference material on "Solutions for Cities at Risk" is still available on the conference Web site, listed in chronological order and by category. For those with access to the World Wide Web, it is possible to consult and download the material. This is especially useful as the conference proceedings do not exist in hard copy yet.

#### **Networking tool**

The contact addresses of all conference participants (including authors, commentators, organisers etc..) are available on site. With almost 500 participants and considering the wide array of topics discussed, networking possibilities are considerable.

#### **Post your announcements**

The conference participants will remain linked via a special service on the email. This means that announcements of any kind (projects, upcoming conferences, calls for information..) can be posted to all the participants via a specific email address.

#### **Share your expertise**

You may provide late comments to the debates which have taken place during the conference, even at this point. You may contact individuals bilaterally or share your ideas with all the conference participants. You may also contact the moderators of each given week, should you need assistance on the theme for which they were responsible.

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## **1997 IDNDR campaign**

The IDNDR Secretariat will use the group email list of 460 participants as a communications medium. Announcements will be posted regularly, starting with the announcement of the 1997 theme ("Natural Disasters May Not Be So Natural") The Secretariat will inform you on upcoming activities, for example the organisation of another conference on the Internet later this year. Stay tuned to be the first ones informed!

How it works...

### **1. To view the 1996 conference**

To view the conference papers and comments, one needs access to the Internet (if in doubt, contact local universities for advice). The conference can be found on the World Wide Web at the address: <http://www.quipu.net/risk/> or <http://www.quipu.net:1996/>

### **2. To join the email for announcements**

Send an email message to the following address: [listserv@thecity.sfsu.edu](mailto:listserv@thecity.sfsu.edu)

In the body of the message write ONLY

Subscribe risk Yourfirstname  
Yourlastname

### **3. To send e-mail messages to the 460 conference participants messages**

Please send it to: [risk@thecity.sfsu.edu](mailto:risk@thecity.sfsu.edu) and write RISK before the title of your message.

## **Conference Organisation**

### **Aims**

- Exchange practical solutions which city authorities and concerned citizens can adapt to local needs.
- Facilitate bilateral networking among professionals of different sectors and countries.
- Create new partnerships and exchanges between participants and/or organisations concerned.
- Identify new partners for the IDNDR Secretariat.

## **How the conference proceeded**

The conference ran in parallel via e-mail and the World Wide Web. All conference material was circulated through both channels. Most participants only had e-mail access. Dialogue and networking occurred mostly via e-mail. The Web site posted all papers and comments, and offered additional services such as Participants Lists (by country and organization), Archives, a Press Room, illustrations and maps, and national campaign reports. Approximately 50% of the material is available in Spanish.

### **Conference discussion topics**

Each week, a moderator was responsible for introducing a given theme, making comments and drawing conclusions (*please see page 2 for the conference programme*).

### **Conference partners**

- **Steering Committee:** the Steering Committee took all the executive decisions. It included the IDNDR Secretariat in Geneva, its regional office in Costa Rica and members of Quipunet. Associate members were the Natural Hazards Center/University in Colorado (USA), Simon Fraser University (Canada) and San Francisco State University (USA).
- **Advisory Board:** guidance on themes was sought from a special Advisory Board of 45 organizations representing a cross-section of professions and countries.
- **Translation team:** translations were produced by members of Quipunet, by the IDNDR Secretariat in Geneva and in Costa Rica and by the Pan-American Health Organisation/WHO.
- **Technical team:** technical partners were Simon Fraser University in Canada, the Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado at Boulder, USA, the Pan-American Health Organisation/WHO, the Computer Science Department of San Francisco University, USA, and the Quipunet technical team (about 15 professionals in various organisations worldwide).

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## Comments by Conference Participants

*"We know today that worldwide awareness exists on cities at risk. This is the most significant outcome of the conference."*

Lucien Coste,  
Hazards and Environment Attache,  
Electricité de France, and Senior Lecturer,  
National School of Mines (Saint Etienne),  
France

*"The conference was a landmark event for both the UN and the hazard/disaster community, demonstrating the vast potential of the Internet to link concerned individuals and institutions around the world. In the week I moderated on the role of universities, the conference brought together teachers, academic researchers, hazards managers and policy makers to share their knowledge and their concerns with an immediacy never before achieved. Hopefully this was only the beginning of an even greater synthesis of knowledge and intellect concerning disaster management and mitigation made possible by Internet communication."*

David L. Butler,  
Editor, Natural Hazards Research  
and Applications Centre,  
Institute of Behavioural Science,  
University of Colorado at Boulder, USA  
(Moderator, week 7)

*"...participants were delighted to find out there was a world out there they could link to. In that respect, apart from anything else, this kind of knowledge and the awareness of some others who can be reached, made the UN Conference a successful one. The conference also created an atmosphere in which non-traditional views were at least listened to. This encouraged the stating of such views. In short, questions were posed rather than proclamations made, and non-traditional views were encouraged."*

E.L. Quarantelli,  
Research Professor, Disaster Research Center,  
University of Delaware, USA  
(Moderator, week 5)

*"The Website is full of valuable information and the conference is serving its objective successfully."*

Mustafa Erdik,  
Professor and Chairman,  
Dept. of Earthquake Engineering, Bogazici  
University, Kandilli Observatory and  
Earthquake Research Institute, Istanbul, Turkey  
(Moderator, week 2)

*"The conference has demonstrated further the critical need for partnership and for transdisciplinarity if we are to achieve systematic natural disaster reduction. It has also emphasised the necessity to build local capacities in order to integrate disaster reduction into the sustainable development process."*

G. Glaser,  
Director, Bureau for Environmental  
Programmes, UNESCO, Paris

*"The most important thing about the conference, from my point of view, was the cross-fertilization among people at very many different standpoints in the disaster management cycle. It was strongest, especially in the two weeks devoted to community participation, when people from local NGOs, municipal workers, etc were involved. Steps should be taken to provide the technical support to expand such grassroots access to the internet."*

Ben Wisner,  
Director of International Studies  
and Professor of Geography,  
California State University Long Beach, USA  
(Moderator, week 3)

*"Providing disaster managers with fast, inexpensive communication tools like the Internet can do as much to improve disaster management as traditional disaster preparedness techniques used for the last 20 years."*

Patricia Bittner,  
Pan American Health Organisation/WHO,  
Washington D.C

*"The conference was an outstanding logistical effort. As in love matters, the follow up is as important as the event itself. We must all make sure a lasting, post-conference structure is put in place."*

R. Flores,  
Medical Officer, World Health Organisation,  
Geneva

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## **What next?**

### ***Production of conference proceedings***

Conference proceedings are under production. All registered conference participants will receive a copy.

### ***Another Internet Conference in 1997***

As part of the 1997 campaign, the IDNDR Secretariat is exploring options to organise another Internet Conference on the theme of "Natural Disasters May Not Be So Natural". The Conference will take place in the summer of 1997. More information will be available soon from the Secretariat.

### ***IDNDR on the Internet***

Links are planned between the conference home page, the main IDNDR Web site (<http://hoshi.cic.sfu.ca/idndr>.) and a planned Stop Disasters Magazine home page, thus maximising networking possibilities and information sources.

### ***Acknowledgments***

The IDNDR Secretariat would like to especially acknowledge the outstanding voluntary contribution of Quipunet, the co-organiser of this initiative. The expertise which Quipunet acquired running other internet conferences, like the recent internet conference on the Kobe earthquake in Japan, proved to be an essential building stone and success factor for "Solutions for Cities at Risk". Information on Quipunet can be obtained from its Web page at: <http://www.quipu.net/>

The conference could not have come true without the support of the participants. We would like to thank all the participants for sharing their expertise, thereby contributing to the high quality of the conference debates. Many also used other conference facilities (such as the possibility to send announcements). This proved that the conference served its purpose as a useful and innovative tool in bringing each of the represented sectors further together to find solutions for cities at risk. We hope this experience encourages even greater participation in similar upcoming events.

The IDNDR Secretariat would also like to acknowledge the voluntary contributions of all the organisational committees, moderators and authors. Their joint efforts proved to be an exceptional example of international cooperation. All parties involved in the conference organisation sustained a dynamic which made "Solutions for Cities at Risk" a successful event. We would like to thank them for their enthusiasm and patience.

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**IDNDR National Committee**  
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### **Tunisia**

**IDNDR National Committee**  
Ministry of Interior  
Office of Civil Protection  
Mr. Moncef Belkhir, Director  
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### **Turkey**

**IDNDR National Committee**  
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Settlement  
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**Intermediate Technology**  
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hazctr@spot.colorado.edu

### **Venezuela**

**Comision Nacional de  
Defensa Civil**  
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Ministerio de Relaciones  
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Los Chaguaramos, Caracas  
Tel: 582 6623205/6621542

### **Vietnam**

**IDNDR National Committee**  
Ministry of Agriculture and  
Rural Development  
Mr. Tu Mao, Director  
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Focal Point: Joint Assistance  
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hmolin@undpcos.nu.or.cr

**Pan American Health  
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Natural Hazards Programme

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Tel: 331 45684120

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Fund (UNICEF)**

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Director Emergency Unit  
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**UNICEF**

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91000 Skopje

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**World Health Organization**

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1211 Genève 27

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Case postale No 2300

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Switzerland

Tel: 41 22 730 81 11

Fax: 41 22 734 23 26

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# **Contacts on Urbanization and Disasters that contributed to Cities at Risk policy report**

The following organizations can be contacted for further information on various aspects of urbanization and disasters. The list is divided into three parts. The first part contains contacts of relevant organizations which provided information for this publication and/or produced reference materials used in this publication.

The second part is a list of city networks which can provide further contacts or information on the topic. The third part is a selected list of organizations which have information about disaster mitigation on the internet.

For additional contacts in specific countries, IDNDR National Committees (which exist in about 140 countries) can provide more information.

(All lists are in alphabetical order by organization.)

## **1. Local, National, International Contacts**

This section contains individuals and organizations which were information sources for Cities at Risk. They include a wide range of professions (health, housing, risk mapping, education, public awareness, etc.) and include a mix of organizations at local, national, regional and international level. Most of the individuals listed provided advice in interviews and/or provided books, articles, conference recommendations, further contacts, etc. In a few cases, organizations were added that were not contacted, but were publishers of recommended materials used in this publication.

**Asia Pacific 2000**  
c/o United Nations  
Development Programme  
(UNDP)  
Wisma UN, Block C, Komplek  
Pejabat Damansara  
Jalan Dungun, Damansara  
Heights  
50490 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Tel (603) 2559122  
Fax. (603) 2552870

**Asian Disaster Preparedness  
Centre**  
G.P.O. Box 2754  
1051 Bangkok, Thailand  
Tel: (66 2) 524 5354  
Fax: (66 2) 524 5360  
E.mail: davholl@ait.ac.th  
Contact David Hollister,  
Shelter & Urban Development  
Officer

**Australian IDNDR  
Coordination Committee**  
P.O. Box 1020, Dickson ACT  
2602, Australia  
Tel: (61-6) 2665408  
Fax: (61-6) 2571490  
Contacts: Trevor Hatchard  
and Susan Whitby

**Bogazici University**  
Kandilli Observatory and  
Earthquake Research Institute  
Department of Earthquake  
Engineering  
81220 Cengelkoy, Istanbul,  
Turkey

Tel: (90 216) 3326560  
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Professor and Chairman

**British Geological Survey**  
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Fax: (44-131) 6620216

**Bureau de Recherches  
Géologiques et Minières -  
SGN/VPE**  
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Regional Planning**  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
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PO Box 26970, Agodi P.O.  
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**City of Nijmegen**  
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Public Relations Manager

**Country Fire Authority**  
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**Department of Social Welfare  
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Contact: Lina Laigo, Secretary  
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**Egyptian Red Crescent  
Society**  
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Contact: Prof. Mamdouh Gabr,  
Secretary General

**GeoHazards International**  
Blume Earthquake Engineering  
Ctr  
Stanford, CA 94305-2215, USA  
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E.mail. tucker@civ.stanford.edu  
Contact: Brian E Tucker,  
President

**Human Settlements  
Management Institute (HSMI)**  
212, Asian Games Village  
Khelgaon Marg, Siri Fort  
New Delhi-110 049, India  
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Intromutos 1002, Manila,  
Philippines  
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**International Association for Earthquake Engineering (IAEE)**

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**The City Planning and Landscape Architectue Library**

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**United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS)**

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**United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD)**

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**World Meteorological Organization (WMO)**  
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Fax: (41-22) 7342326

## 2. City Networks

This section provides contact information on international city networks. Some of the headquarters of these networks have information or programmes about urban disaster mitigation. All of these networks have member organizations interested and/or knowledgeable about various disaster mitigation aspects.

**CITYNET**  
(Regional network of local authorities for the management of human settlements)  
International Organisations Centre  
Pacific-Yokohama  
1-1-1 Minato Mirai, Nishi ku  
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Fax: (81 45) 2232162

**Habitat International Coalition (Main Office) (NGO network)**  
Cordobanes no. 24  
COL-San José Insurgentes  
Mexico DF 03900, Mexico  
Tel: (525) 5935194  
Fax (525) 5935194  
Contact: Enrique Ortiz,  
Executive Secretary

**Local Authorities Confronting Disasters and Emergencies (LACDE)**  
Union of Local Authorities in Israel  
3 Haftman Street, Tel Aviv,  
61200 Israel  
Tel. (972) 36955024  
Fax (972) 36967447

**International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)**  
City Hall, East Town, 8th floor  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2,  
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Tel: (1-613) 4163921462  
Fax: (1-613) 4163921478

**International City Management Association (ICMA)**  
777 N. Capital Street  
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Contact: Don Geis

**International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP)**  
43 Wassenaarseweg  
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Fax: (33-70) 3282085  
Contact: Marten Block,  
Secretary General

**International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP)**  
Mauritskade 23  
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Fax: (3170) 3617909  
Contact: Hein Struben, Vice  
President

**Metropolis World Association of Megacities**  
61 rue de Babylone  
75007 Paris  
France  
Tel: (33-1) 53856262  
Fax: (33-1) 53856269

**United Towns Organization (UTO)**  
22, rue d'Alsace  
92532 Levallois-Perret, Cedex,  
France  
Tel (33-1) 47393686  
Fax: (33-1) 47393685  
Contact: Jorge Sampaio

## 3. Internet Addresses for Disaster Mitigation

The following is a selection of internet addresses with information about disaster mitigation. Urban disaster mitigation issues are sometimes addressed. The addresses are drawn from IDNDR Secretariat sources and the following publication: *IDNDR - Disaster Mitigation, Preparedness and Response. An Audit of UK Assets* (D. Sanderson, I. Davis, J. Twigg, B. Cowden), Oxford Centre for Disaster Studies in association with Intermediate Technology, 1995.

**Emergency Preparedness Information Exchange (EPIX)**  
<http://hoshi.cic.sfu.ca/epix>

**Environmental Organisation Web Division - Disasters**  
<http://www.wcb.directory.com/disasters>

**Global Emergency Management Disaster Counselling Support Network**  
<http://tin.ssc.plym.ac.uk/gemc.html>

**International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction**  
<http://hoshi.cic.sfu.ca/hazard/idnldr.html>

**Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Centre, University of Colorado**  
<http://adder.colorado.edu/hazctr/home.html>

**Quipunet**  
PO Box 4334, South Colby, WA  
98384-0334, USA  
E.mail:  
[delgado@bach.taisei.co.jp](mailto:delgado@bach.taisei.co.jp)  
Contact: Alberto Delgado

**US Agency for International Development (USAID)**  
<http://www.info.usaid.gov>

**US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**  
<http://www.fema.gov>

**US National Oceanographic Administration (NOAA)**  
<http://hoshi.cic.sfu.ca/hazard>

**Volunteers in Technical Assistance (VITA)**  
<http://www.vita.org>