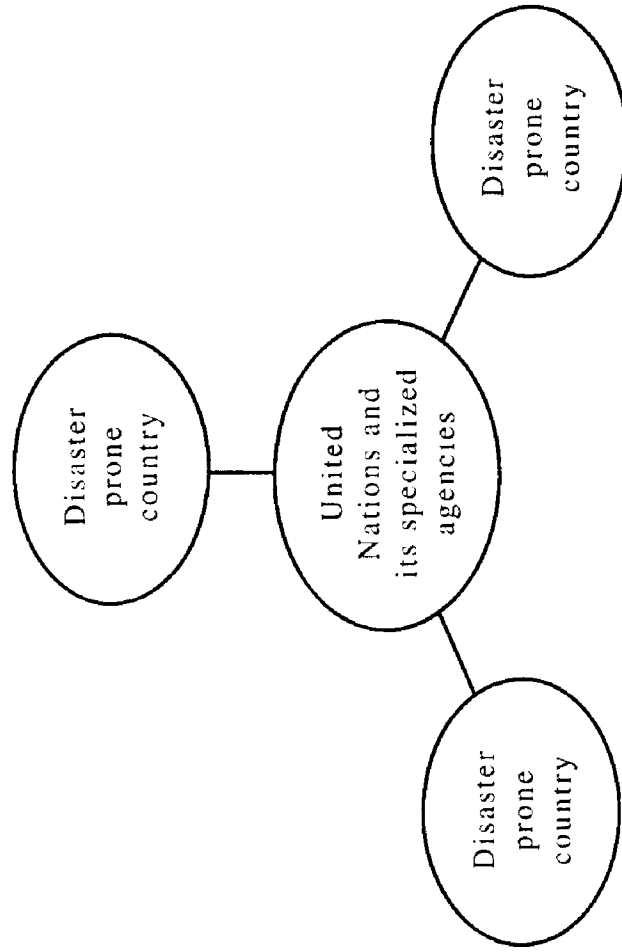


## **How To Promote Technical Co - operation Between Developing Countries - TCDC - to Improve Disaster Management**

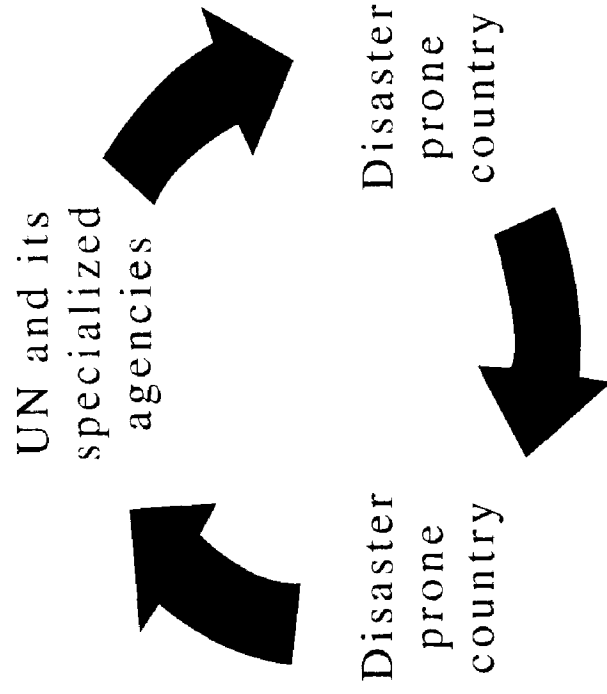
*International Workshop on Natural Disaster Management - Beijing China*



*Sharing of data, information, and experience*

## **How To Promote Technical Co - operation Between Developing Countries - TCDC - to Improve Disaster Management**

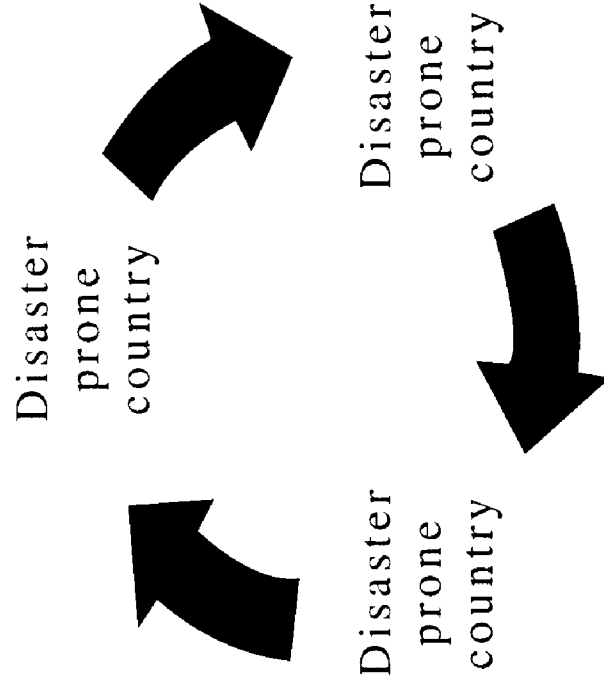
*International Workshop on Natural Disaster Management - Beijing China*



*Sharing of data, information, and experience*

## **How To Promote Technical Co - operation Between Developing Countries - TCDC - to Improve Disaster Management**

*International Workshop on Natural Disaster Management - Beijing China*



*Sharing of data, information, and experience*

## **Workshop Conclusions: How To Promote Technical Co - operation Between Developing Countries - TCDC - to Improve Disaster Management**

*International Workshop on Natural Disaster Management - Beijing China*

- ▶ **Need to implement TDDC**
- ▶ **Importance of TCDC for knowledge exchange**
  - ▶ Disaster prevention and preparedness for effective response
- ▶ **The organisation format is not as important as starting meaningful TCDC projects and programs without delay**
  - ▶ TCDC may be with or without UN agency co-ordination or participation
  - ▶ Co-operation directly between disaster prone countries is strongly encouraged
- ▶ **Implementation modalities need to be flexible**
  - ▶ Study tours, fellowship training, and exchange projects
  - ▶ Other projects and programs to meet the specific TCDC objective

*Sharing of data, information, and experience*

## **How To Promote Technical Co - operation Between Developing Countries - TCDC - to Improve Disaster Management**

*International Workshop on Natural Disaster Management - Beijing China*

- ▶ **Possible modalities of technical co-operation**
- ▶ Bilateral programmes and regional initiatives
  - ▶ Use of UNDP Country Offices, Regional Bureau, and Emergency Response Division
- ▶ UN / Red Cross as broker and facilitator
- ▶ Study tours, exchange programs, participation in exercises, exchange of information and expertise
- ▶ Participation in existing networks and projects
  - ▶ INSARAG, UNDAC system, SPHERE, MCDA
- ▶ OCHA regional disaster response advisor
- ▶ UN-DMT / Red Cross regional assistance

**UNITED NATIONS**  
**CLOSING STATEMENT**  
**NATURAL DISASTER PREVENTION AND SUSTAINABLE LAND USE**

**Dr. Nay Htun**  
**United Nations Assistant Secretary-General**  
**UNDP Assistant Administrator and RBAP Director**  
**New York**

*Your Excellencies, Mr. Xu Ruixin, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Civil Affairs, Respected Guests, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

This workshop has addressed several key issues to reduce the devastating impact of natural disasters, including the importance of strengthening each link of the disaster mitigation chain, improving information exchange and communication, involving communities and increasing public awareness, and protecting the environment for disaster prevention. In this closing address, I would like to come back to this last point and highlight the importance of sustainable land use for natural disaster prevention.

Natural disasters during the 1980's were 94 percent more frequent than in the previous decade<sup>1</sup>. So far, the 1990's promise to be even worse. In the year 1998 only, natural catastrophes claimed the lives of more than 50,000 people, worldwide and resulting economic losses exceeded US\$ 90 billion<sup>2</sup>. In addition, 700 "large loss events" were recorded in 1998, compared with between 530 and 600 such events during recent years.

An increased frequency of natural disasters can also be noticed in China. In the past 40 years, the frequency of medium to large-scale disasters has increased decade by decade, from 3 in the 1960's to 10 in the 1990's. Five catastrophic floods affected China this decade alone. They took place in 1991, 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1998.

This increased incidence of natural disasters suggests a strong anthropogenic influence. Since 1931, the population of the four most flood-affected provinces of the Yangtze basin has grown from 99 to 226 million people. Massive growth in upland population, deforestation, and slope cultivation without appropriate soil and water conservation measures have led to heavy soil erosion. The area of the Yangtze River Valley affected by soil erosion has increased from 20% four decades ago to 32% today<sup>3</sup>.

As a result, 2.1 billion tons of sediments are washed into the Yangtze River every year. Researchers from the Chinese Academy of Forestry<sup>4</sup> have estimated that soil erosion has contributed to raising the riverbed by 1 meter every ten years in some sections of the Yangtze River. Today, the flood water level can be up to 10 meters higher than the surrounding areas in some river sections.

High accumulation of sediments combined with a dramatic reduction in flood absorbing areas, such as wetlands and lakes, substantially increased the 1998 water levels and contributed to the 1998 catastrophic floods. While the water discharges at their peak in 1998 were less than those of 1870, 1931 and 1954, the floodwater levels in 1998 were much higher than the historical highs<sup>5</sup>.

In the past 50 years, the Government of China has built 247,000 km of dykes, 84,000 reservoirs, and 490,000 irrigation and drainage stations<sup>6</sup>. This unprecedented water conservation and flood control infrastructure played a significant role in controlling the 1998 catastrophic floods. However, the traditional

1 The Future in Plain Sight-Eugene Linden

2 Munich Re reported by Agence France-Presse, 29 December 1998

3 State Environmental Protection Agency-Reported in China Daily, 4 June, 1999

4 Catastrophic Flood in 1998 and the post factum Ecological and Environmental Reconstruction in China, Dr Zhang Shougong, Dr Wang Yanhui, Ms Jia Zhiqing, Ph.D. Chinese Academy of Forestry

5 The Indicators of Disaster in China - Presentation to the U.N.-DMT, 18 May, 1999  
Dr Wang Angsheng, Center for Disaster Reduction, Chinese Academy of China

6 The National Natural Disaster Reduction Plan of The People's Republic of China - 1998

reliance on structural flood control measures needs to be supplemented by more cost-effective non-structural initiatives.

Building flood control infrastructure to confront 100-year flood peaks (that is, floods which may occur once in every 100 years or more) for all major rivers in China would require such a high investment, in many billion dollars<sup>7</sup>, that an exact figure cannot even be reached.

In the aftermath of the 1998 catastrophic floods, China formulated a new policy framework to promote *Ecological Watershed Management*. This approach stresses the need to integrate land use planning and water resource management in each river basin on a basin wide approach. It recognizes that forest, soil, and wetland conservation is the most efficient and cost-effective flood control measure on a regional scale.

The soil and water conservation measures identified in this new policy framework, such as promoting sustainable upland farming and restoring wetlands and lakes to their 1954 capacity, should be implemented as a priority to reduce sedimentation and to re-establish the potential of natural hydrological systems to accommodate water surges.

If the 1998 catastrophic floods have been worsened by environmental degradation, they have in turn exacted a heavy toll on the environment that calls for repair. In 1998, 261,300 hectares of farmland in China were lost because of floods<sup>8</sup>. It is imperative to restore areas that have suffered environmental degradation to ensure a sustainable livelihood for the affected population; and to break the vicious cycle of poverty>environmental degradation>natural disasters.

UNDP will endeavour to assist Chinese Government efforts to promote ecological watershed management through a GEF/UNDP/AUSAID programme to conserve wetland bio-diversity in four key sites in China. As part of this programme, approximately US\$ 56 million will be invested by the Government of China and US\$ 1.7 million by the GEF/UNDP/AUSAID to restore Dongting Lake in the Yangtze River Basin. This project is expected to start by the end of this year (1999).

This project will build on and complement several on-going UNDP initiatives for soil rehabilitation and sustainable land management, such as capacity development for the implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and for Sustainable Land Management for Agricultural Production.

None of these issues of deforestation, soil degradation and unsustainable land use is unique to China; but symptomatic of the difficulties that countries everywhere encounter in reconciling economic growth and sustainable natural resources management. UNDP attaches great importance to soil rehabilitation and appropriate land management for sustainable livelihood; which includes proper planning for human settlement. Soil degradation is particularly detrimental to poorer areas of all countries, where economies are more dependent on natural resources and, therefore, more vulnerable.

UNDP is considering establishing a regional mechanism for *Soil Rehabilitation for Sustainable Livelihood*. The objectives will be to assist member countries in preserving soil biodiversity, rehabilitating degraded soil, promoting sustainable land use management, and mobilising needed resources for all of these activities. UNDP believes that such a mechanism could play a key role in addressing the root causes of catastrophic floods and in reversing the trend towards an increased occurrence of natural disasters.

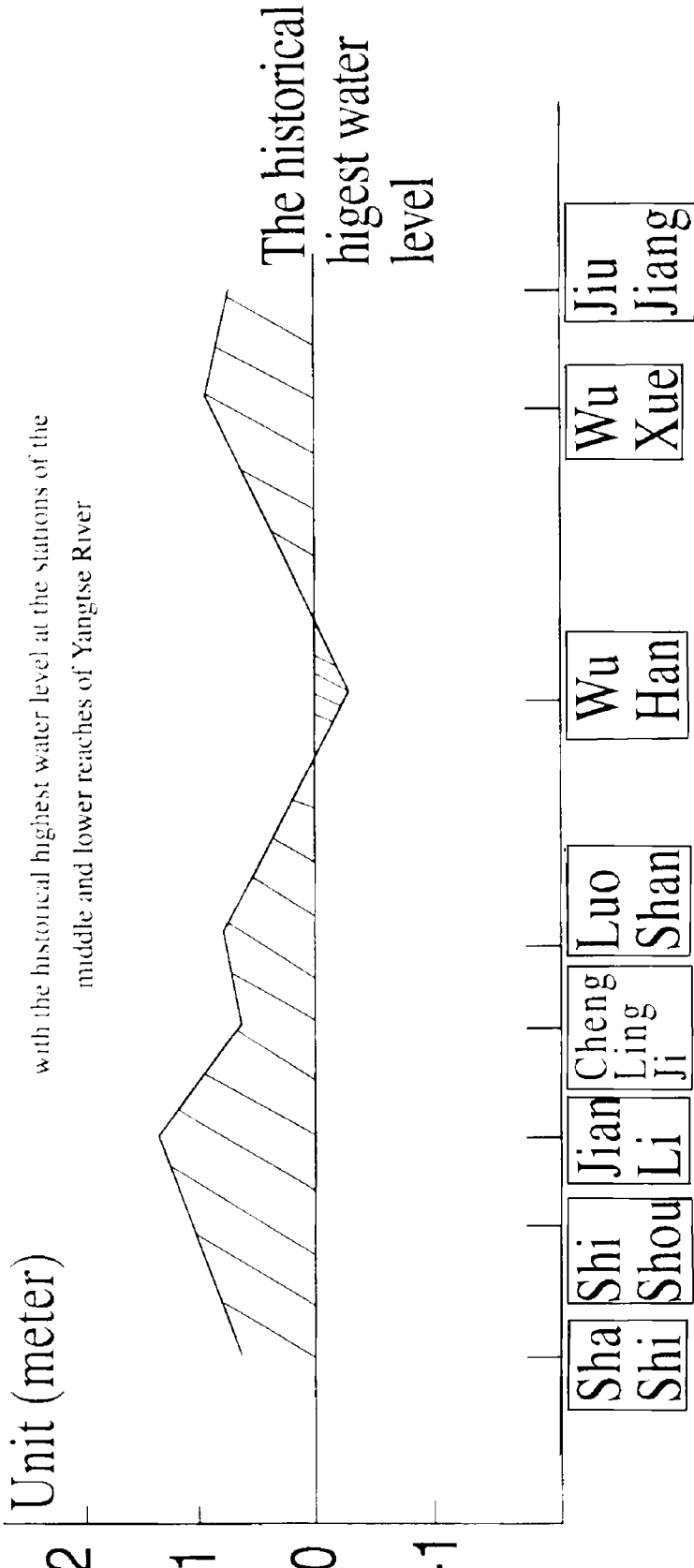
The apparent variety of natural disasters hides a strong commonality in causes and appropriate mitigation measures. As this workshop makes clear, lessons learned in natural disaster management in one part of the world could prove invaluable to reduce natural disaster frequency and effects in other parts of the world. This workshop provides a unique opportunity for some of the most disaster-prone countries in the world to share experience in terms of disaster forecasting, relief, rehabilitation, and mitigation.

UNDP sees this workshop as a first step in a cooperation process among countries in disaster management and rehabilitation. UNDP stands ready to assist this process through its programmes for regional cooperation and Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.

## Annex

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Land and Resources - reported in China Daily, 31 May, 1999

## Comparing the highest water level in 1998



- The maximum flow of flood peak in WuHan is 76,100 M<sup>3</sup>/s in 1954; the maximum flow of flood peak in YiChang is 64,600 M<sup>3</sup>/s in 1931.
- The maximum flow of flood peak in WuHan is 69,600 M<sup>3</sup>/s in 1998; the maximum flow of flood peak in YiChang is 63,600 M<sup>3</sup>/s in 1998.
- The maximum flow of flood peak in YiChang is 110,000 M<sup>3</sup>/s in 1870.





**GOVERNMENT OF CHINA**  
**CLOSING STATEMENT**  
**SUMMARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP**  
**ON NATURAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

**Xu Ruixin**

**Vice Minister of Ministry of Civil Affairs**  
**The People's Republic of China**

*Fellow Deputies,*

The International Workshop on Natural Disaster Management, co-sponsored by the United Nations System and the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs is about to conclude today. This workshop has aroused great attention of both the Chinese Government and the United Nations. Jiang Zemin, President of the People's Republic of China, has sent his message of congratulation to the workshop. In his message, he pointed out that the Chinese government attaches great importance to the management and mitigation of natural disasters, and has given priority to the role of disaster reduction in the nation's economic and social development. The President also highly appreciates the UN achievements in the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

Mr Duoqi Cairang, Minister of MOCA, concluded in his opening speech, the experience of the Chinese government in the fight against the floods in 1998. He emphasized that the basic guarantees of victory over floods are: correct leadership, strong organization and coordination of the Chinese government; rapid development of economic construction, full play of the Peoples Liberation Army's role as a major force in the relief operations, the fine tradition of "when one in difficulty, help comes forward from all by people throughout the nation"; and the emergency relief aid efficiently organized by the UNDP and other agencies to the flooded areas.

Mr. Putman-Cramer, deputy director of OCHA in his speech on behalf of Mr. De Mello, UN Under-Secretary-General, pointed out that this workshop has provided a good opportunity for managers and specialists from different countries to share experience and knowledge in the field of natural disaster mitigation. The concerted efforts made by relevant UN organizations will make contributions to enhancing the cooperation in various aspects of natural disaster reduction among the international community, particularly in developing countries. Ms. Aysan from UNDP has emphasized in her speech on behalf of Mr. Bakhet that the combination of sustained development and natural disaster reduction is an important way to mitigate regional disaster risk. Mr. Qureshi reiterated the importance of this workshop in his speech on behalf of Ms. Leitner, UNDP resident representative in China.

In the thematic speeches, the deputies pointed out that:

- It is possible to reduce losses in life and property to a large scale by making effective use of in-time early warning information of floods, flood prevention projects, and bringing the role of the local governments and PLA into full play.
- The effective implementation of post-flood recovery and rehabilitation measures can both reflect the mechanism of mutual coordination between development and natural disaster reduction, and also promote the level of disaster management to reach the goal of comprehensive natural disaster reduction
- The emergency assessment of natural disasters is the basis for emergency aid. The coordinated development of resources, environment, population, and economy is an important method of natural disaster mitigation.

- The function of emergency rescue organizations should be emphasized. Relevant disaster reduction resources in the UN system should not only be effectively utilized, but should also take part in post-disaster rehabilitation.
- It should be emphasized that the IDNDR activities are a way to move from emergency relief to promoting disaster prevention capacity and thus reducing the vulnerability of mankind to natural hazards.
- In regard to the extraordinary flood in 1998, the UN system has appealed for emergency aid to assist the Chinese government in emergency relief and has had obvious success.

During the thematic presentations, the Chinese deputies introduced our fight against the 1998 floods and the post-flood control of our rivers. They pointed out that the main measures taken in the 1998 flood fighting were: full preparation and comprehensive disposition; unified leadership and correct decision-making; military and civilians were united to make full exertion to deal with the emergency; concerted operation took place between different sectors and trades; dealing with emergencies with a scientific attitude; and to take flood prevention measures in strict accordance with the law.

In the period of fighting against the catastrophic floods, the Chinese Government timely sent out warning information, and undertook immediate response such as evacuating people affected by floods, making an assessment of the overall flood losses, providing disaster victims with temporary shelter, food, clothes and medical treatment, and organizing ever-larger scale fund raising activities. The coordinating system of disaster relief was established to strengthen the local governments function in disaster rescue and relief. The whole society was mobilized and organized to be involved in the disaster relief. All these are the essential experience obtained from the disaster relief work in the summer 1998 flood.

In accordance with post-disaster rehabilitation and disaster prevention and reduction, the Chinese government has taken a series of measures for flood prevention and disaster mitigation. In the future work of disaster mitigation, the Government also emphasized the need to enhance macro-disaster management, upgrade the level of socialization, raise social awareness, establish an insurance system for flood disasters, and strengthen international cooperation in disaster reduction.

The Vietnamese delegate talked about the effectiveness of using Geographic Information Systems in the national management of natural disaster; the Bangladesh delegate pointed out that the country could achieve better effectiveness by combining structural mitigation measures with non-structure mitigation measures in natural disaster management; the Cuba delegate believed that the state military forces played an important role in dealing with natural and man-made disasters; and the delegate from Kenya stressed that drought was one of the major hazards causing famine in his nation, and that effective coordinating work at the top level played a crucial role in disaster reduction. The delegate from Peru talked about the great impact of El Nino on the coastal environment, resources and social economy of the country; the Canadian delegate demonstrated the advantage of using Radarsat Monitoring Technology in flood monitoring and management; the delegate from the Philippines emphasized the importance of developing a national plan of disaster reduction; and the role of non-structure mitigation measures such as disaster management, science and technology, public media and press, and public administration. And the delegate from Poland reviewed the important functions of disaster management structures at various government levels in the fight against the 1997 floods, and the strengthening the necessity of improving government functions and cross-area cooperation in flood emergency management.

As known to all, disaster management is a very complicated procedure. It consists of disaster forecasting, warning, pre-disaster preparedness, disaster emergency rescue, post-disaster arrangements for temporary shelter, and rehabilitation. In this workshop, full discussions were made about all of these topics in six discussion groups. Some delegates made very vivid presentations, which widely drew attention of the participants. Many good suggestions and practical advice came out as a result.

In terms of prediction, warning, and simulation of natural disasters, the participants consider the accurate prediction of natural disasters as their biggest challenge. A key link in disaster mitigation is to set up an

early warning system for natural disasters. The simulation of natural disasters not only lays the basis for developing disaster mitigation plans, but also is of great importance to emergency rescue. It is also pointed out that early warning of disasters is crucial in the effectiveness of disaster mitigation; however early warning must rely on the progress of science and technology. In the prediction of China's 1998 flood, many Chinese scientists made great contributions that reduced disaster losses. It is necessary to improve the linkage of scientists and disaster prediction institutes, with government administrative sectors as there might be less risk for the government to make warning based on the result of disaster prediction. The sharing of disaster information between countries and regions will also enable early disaster warning.

In terms of the theory of disaster mitigation and practice, the participants considered the theory of the scientific basis of the practice of disaster mitigation. They emphasize that the disaster mitigation mechanism is the core of this theory. The key of making reforms of the disaster mitigation mechanism is to bring the initiative of the central and local government, military forces, scientific and technical institutes, education agencies, and NGOs, into full play. In the practice of disaster mitigation, it is a valuable experience to work out a comprehensive plan of disaster mitigation, set up disaster mitigation centers, make full use of all kinds of disaster mitigation technology (such as remote sensing and GIS), timely obtain all kinds of disaster information, give full play to the comprehensive disaster mitigation measures of physical and non-physical flood mitigation, and pay attention to the community function in disaster mitigation practice both at national level and at the district level. All of these experiences are worthy of further extension.

In terms of emergency preparedness, participants of the workshop showed concern over the Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. Disaster preparedness is an important component in natural disaster management. It is necessary to take various steps in accordance with the severity of natural hazards. The participants focused their discussion on cooperation channels among developing countries in the field of disaster preparedness. Top priority should be put into cooperation among scientists, public administrators, and the general public. The participants held that disaster preparedness is a significant part of natural disaster reduction and more actions should be taken to promote Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. Particular emphasis should be placed in sharing experience, information, and data among nations in implementing relevant disaster preparedness projects.

In terms of emergency rescue and temporary settlement of people affected by natural disasters, the participants regard these actions as significant measures in guaranteeing the safety of life and property; and ensuring the basic livelihood of the disaster victims and social stability in the disaster-affected areas. Governments, the general public in the community, and the military constitute the major forces in natural disaster relief. Since the disaster relief capability in developing countries is relatively weak, the international community should give wide support and assistance to promote the close cooperation among developing countries in this area. The UN system is expected to play a bigger role in this aspect.

In terms of post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation, the deputies think that this aspect is a major social and economic challenge in disaster prone areas. Many delegates pointed out that this process is not a simple repetition of past experience. It should surpass its original level, to meet future needs of development and increase overall disaster reduction capability. Deputies from China and other countries introduced their experience and practices in this subject. The deputies also emphasized that the overall objective in disaster areas should be considered and top priority should be given to life-line works to make possible integrated coordination of relationship between natural disaster reduction and development.

*Fellow deputies*, the workshop has reached a consensus in many aspects and put forward priorities in developing international exchanges and cooperation including:

1. Enhance the personnel exchange in natural disaster management, exchange experience in this area and promote the mutual understanding, among nations; pay attention to Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.
2. Establish a mechanism of information sharing relating to natural disasters, and further develop exchanges and coordination in this area. Attach importance to capability building

- of communities for natural disaster reduction.
3. Improve the capability of The UN system in coordinating the promotion of exchange and cooperation in natural disaster management, and enable the UN to play a greater role in this area
  4. The deputies call on the following issues to be addressed at the IDNDR International Programme Forum to be convened in Geneva in July 1999: The role of relevant UN agencies should be brought into full play. Technical cooperation in various aspects among developing countries, and between developed and developing countries should be promoted, particularly in the area of advanced technology in natural disaster management and prevention, and in information and data sharing. Multiple training and education in natural disaster education should be carried out in developing countries.

*Fellow deputies*, this workshop has been a complete success due to the concerted efforts of all. As Chairman from the Chinese delegation, I would like to extend out hearty thanks to you all for your important contributions to the workshop.

Fellow deputies, although the 3 day workshop was short, as old and new friends, we have deepened our understanding and friendship. I am sure this workshop will constitute a new start for further exchange and cooperation. Upon the closing of the workshop, many of you will return home. I wish you a pleasant journey.

The Secretariat of the workshop has contributed to the success of the workshop. I propose to express our thanks to them. During the workshop, staff of the Lido Holiday Inn have also provided us with good services. I would like to extend out thanks to them as well.

Now, I declare the close of the International Workshop on Natural Disaster Reduction.

Thank you.

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**10 - 12 June, 1999  
Beijing, China**

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