
***IV. Targets, Programme Framework
and Guidelines for National
Committees established by the
Scientific and Technical Committee***



Cyclone Tracy. Darwin, NT, Australia. December 1975.
Courtesy: Australian IDNDR Co-ordination Committee.

TARGETS

The general objective of the International Decade for National Disaster Reduction is the reduction of human and economic losses resulting from the occurrence of natural hazards. Post-disaster studies have convincingly demonstrated that certain actions taken prior to the occurrence of a natural hazard are cost-effective to attain this general objective. Thus, one way to assess progress is to evaluate the application of proven loss-reduction practices.

The Scientific and Technical Committee considers that the setting of specific objectives or targets should provide a measure of progress to be used, not just at the mid-term and conclusion of the Decade, but on a regular basis. The responsibility to implement disaster-reduction measures rests largely at the national level; consequently, most of the recommended targets will be national or local targets.

Disaster-reduction practices prior to the occurrence of a natural hazard involve three broad areas:

- (a) *Assessment of risks: an evaluation of the hazards and vulnerabilities and the use of this information in decision-making;*
- (b) *Short- and long-term preventive measures;*
- (c) *Warning: short-term prediction and communication to avert or minimize hazardous impacts.*

Specific targets to be achieved by the year 2000 are proposed as part of national plans for sustainable development. Clearly, each country will need to select its own targets according to its risk and vulnerability to disasters, level of economic development, and other special characteristics. Targets applicable to a rural country mainly affected by locust infestations and droughts will be distinct from those with large metropolitan areas exposed to the risk of earthquakes.

Dust storm. Melbourne, VIC, Australia.
February 1983. Courtesy: Australian
IDNDR Co-ordination Committee.



The Scientific and Technical Committee charged by the General Assembly to develop overall programmes for the Decade, taking into account priorities and gaps in technical knowledge identified at the national level, held two sessions in 1991 and developed a series of recommendations on targets for implementation of the Decade, the programme framework for technical activities to be initiated during the Decade as well as guidelines for National Committees which carry the main responsibility for disaster mitigation at the country level

AS TARGETS, BY THE YEAR 2000, ALL COUNTRIES, AS PART OF THEIR PLAN TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE:

(a) Comprehensive national assessments of risks from natural hazards, with these assessments taken into account in development plans;

- (i) All natural hazards posing a disaster risk should be identified and brought to the attention of decision makers, using standardized methodology, symbols and terminology for risk mapping. Areas should be classified according to their level of exposure to each type of natural disaster;

(b) Mitigation plans at national and/or local levels, involving long-term prevention and preparedness and community awareness;

- (i) Legislative authorities at national, state or local level should establish the necessary legal framework for the implementation of mitigation measures, such as land-use planning, water and forest management and building codes. Authorities should keep in mind that laws and codes that are not enforced are of little benefit;
- (ii) National, state or local institutions responsible for the planning of general socio-economic development and infrastructure, the private sector and bilateral or multilateral development agencies all should give due consideration to the level of risk to natural hazards at the earlier stages of their decision-making process;
- (iii) Cost-effective measures to prevent the occurrence or recurrence of avoidable natural hazards (for example, in the case of floods, landslides, forest fires, etc.) should receive from the national and bilateral or multilateral agencies priority consideration for funding and implementation;
- (iv) Academic institutions and professional schools in disciplines such as engineering, agriculture, architecture, planning, business or public administration should include in their curricula locally applicable disaster-reduction concepts and measures;
- (v) National, state or provincial, and local authorities should develop, periodically test and update emergency plans to provide preparedness assistance promptly and efficiently in case of natural disasters. The plans based on the more efficient use of resources existing locally should address all types of natural risks present. More emphasis should be placed on the process of interinstitutional dialogue rather than on the document itself: plans that are not familiar to the participants are of no use;
- (vi) Medical and other health-related academic institutions or professional schools should provide formal training to the personnel responsible for first response after natural disasters. This academic education will be periodically completed by on-the-job training;

