



### Acknowledgement

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### Note

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

*The photo on the front cover "Girls salvaging their ration cards" is by Azizur Rahim Pev of Bangladesh, winner of the 1998 IDNDR International Photo Contest.*

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*Philippines: grade schoolers campaigning on the street during the observance of the 1998 natural disaster consciousness week.*

# Message of the United Nations Secretary-General on the occasion of the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction, October 8, 1997.

This year's observance of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction shines a spotlight on the role of water in natural disasters. Earthquakes, cyclones and volcanic eruptions may be among the most dramatic natural hazards, but water-related disasters - from floods and drought to desertification - affect more people and cause more damage. Indeed, with the "El Niño" phenomenon currently causing both flooding in Peru and drought in Indonesia, the focus on water is especially timely.

Floods are occurring more frequently than other disasters, a trend attributable to many causes, including deforestation and rapid development, especially in urban areas. However, drought and desertification are also on the rise. Drought is also a leading killer, causing the deaths of a reported 74,000 people in 1996. Desertification affects one fourth of all the earth's land and more than one billion of the world's people, and costs US\$42 billion each year in lost productivity. Here, too, deforestation is a major contributing factor, along with other poor land use practices such as over-grazing, over-cultivation and mismanagement of irrigation.

The United Nations is fully engaged in efforts to help countries cope with natural disasters and incorporate disaster reduction and preparedness into their overall development plans. In 1989, as a spur to international action and cooperation, the General Assembly proclaimed the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1990 - 2000). Throughout the 1990's, the United Nations conferences on the environment, human settlements and other issues stressed the links between disaster reduction and sustainable development.

Since the World Conference for Natural Disaster Reduction, held in 1994 in Yokohama, Japan, many countries have adopted new laws and national strategies for disaster reduction, preparedness and mitigation. The United

Nations, for its part, has carried out disaster management programmes in dozens of countries, focusing on institution-building, early warning, networking between institutions and individuals, and the production and dissemination of training materials. When disaster strikes, the Organization arranges for relief shipments, launches international appeals for assistance and serves as a clearinghouse for information about needs and consequences.

We face a paradox with water-related disasters: too much water, and too little. Virtually every country faces the prospect of both flood and water shortage. Moreover, such disasters know no borders; floods and droughts often affect several countries at once.

The case for international cooperation is clear. So is the humanitarian imperative: reducing the loss of life, property damage, and economic and social disruptions caused by natural disasters and environmental emergencies. So let us pledge, on the occasion of International Day for Disaster Reduction 1997, to intensify our work of promoting an ethos of disaster prevention in order to build a safer world for the 21st century.

# Secretary-General calls for sustained commitment to safer world in message on 1998 Natural Disaster Reduction Day.

NEW YORK - Following is the text of Secretary-General Kofi Annan's message on the occasion of the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction, observed this year on 14 October:

Almost daily, we are reminded of the threat of natural disasters. Since the beginning of the year, we have endured catastrophic floods in Asia, deadly hurricanes in the Americas and the serious consequences of El Niño on several continents. But, while we cannot stop the forces of nature, we can and must prevent them from turning into major social and economic disasters.

Natural hazards capture the imagination, and we tend to think of them in terms of the dramatic images we see on television, but the true extent of their impact lies elsewhere. They profoundly affect our efforts to achieve sustainable development. By their powerful impact on the supply of primary commodities, they disrupt market stability, leading to tremendous declines in national revenue. In many developing countries, 5 per cent of gross national product may be lost to natural disasters each year. In the United States of America, damage caused by natural hazards is estimated, on average, to reach \$ 1 billion per week.

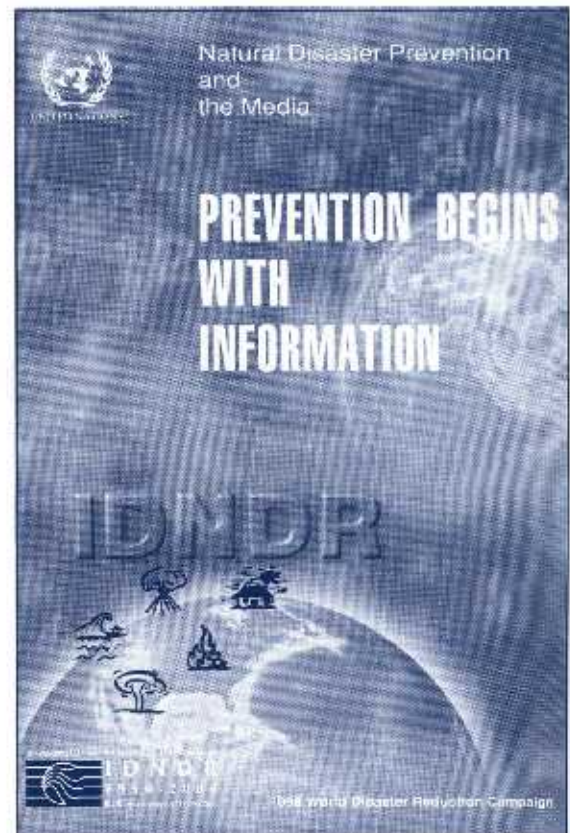
We can no longer afford, financially or socially, to rely only on the expectations of relief when disaster strikes. Preparedness measures for more efficient rescue operations will remain necessary, but we must first turn much greater attention to the introduction of preventive strategies aimed at saving lives and protecting assets before they are lost. The programme for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, adopted by the General Assembly in 1989 and refined at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Yokohama in 1994, provides us with the necessary guidelines for action.

Science and technology play a central role in reducing the economic and social conse-

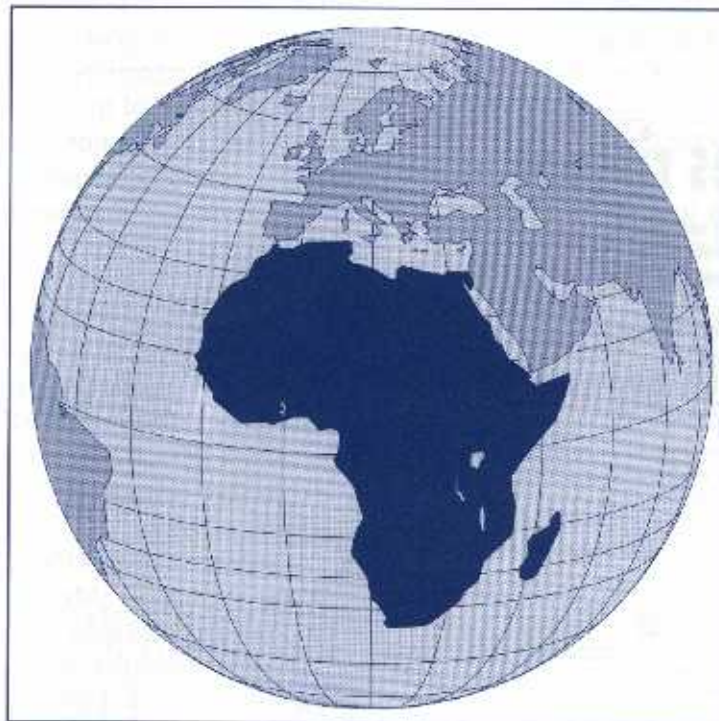
quences of natural hazards. This year's observance of the International Day highlights the importance of information in communicating these technical abilities and in sharing practical experiences to make communities safer. As more and more countries incorporate disaster prevention policies into national development plans, they are focusing on the value of improved risk assessments and timely and effective early warning, as well as trying to enlist the help of educators, non-governmental organizations, civil society institutions and private sector enterprises, such as insurance companies. Agencies of the United Nations system, such as the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank, have been particularly active in contributing their technical expertise to this cause.

Prevention begins with information. On this International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction, I wish to encourage the widest possible partnership, communication and exchange of information among all groups of society and all nations to ensure a sustained commitment to a safer world, a world more resilient to the impact of natural hazards and disasters





# A F R I C A



## ALGERIA

The National Committee for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction organised for the International Day for Natural Disaster Prevention, on 14 October 1998, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a work day to which more than 100 persons participated. The participants came from the National Committee, several Ministerial Departments, specialised agencies, NGOs and the Media.

**Réduire les risques**  
Catastrophes naturelles  
et politique nationale  
de prévention

**Catastrophes naturelles**  
**Le devoir de prévention**

Journée internationale de prévention des catastrophes naturelles  
**La déaillance de l'information**

L'Agence nationale de l'information sur les catastrophes naturelles (ANIC) a été créée en 1994, sous l'égide du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, pour promouvoir la culture de la prévention des catastrophes naturelles et assurer une meilleure gestion de l'information.

**Les médias, un rôle prépondérant**

Le rôle des médias est primordial dans la prévention des catastrophes naturelles. Ils permettent de sensibiliser le public, de diffuser les alertes et de promouvoir les mesures de prévention.

**L'alerte et l'organisation des interventions**

La mise en place d'un système d'alerte et d'organisation des interventions est essentielle pour réduire les risques de catastrophes naturelles.

**Le bilan de 1994 à 1997**

Le bilan de ces trois années montre que les efforts de prévention ont été fructueux, avec une réduction notable des pertes humaines et matérielles.

### The theme was:

- role of the media and natural disaster prevention
- prevention starts with information.

Members of the media attending the meetings were very interested by the topic and they later produced numerous newspaper articles and radio/television programmes on the subjects discussed.

The National Committee brought together professionals in natural disaster reduction, specialists from media and communication and representatives of civilian bodies through the non-governmental organisations.

The Day's events featured a series of presentations addressing the major risks (earthquakes, floods, technological disasters) to which Algeria is exposed; a description of the present insurance coverage of major risks and prospects of improvement in this area; the pedagogical role of the Civil Protection and of risk prevention in schools, and the role of the media in promoting knowledge and information on the prevention of the worst effects of natural disasters.

- On the subject of seismic risk, the Director of Centre National de Recherche appliquée en Génie Parasismique (CCS) underlined the need for further studies on the vulnerability of socio-economic infrastructure. He also called for an exhaustive cartography of areas exposed to seismic activity.
- The representative of the National Agency for Water Resources (ANRH) also called for an improved cartography and the setting up of a system of prevention and alert. He stated that each year a great deal of damage was caused by exceptional meteorological conditions.
- The Director General of Civil Protection talked about the importance of familiarising school children in methods of first aid and safety measures in time of crisis.



## CATASTROPHES NATURELLES ET RISQUES MAJEURS La prévention est l'affaire de tous

**R**éflexe des médias dans la prévention des catastrophes naturelles ? tel est le thème retenu cette année pour la célébration de la Journée internationale de prévention des risques naturels. A cet effet, l'unité nationale d'intervention de la Protection Civile (El-Hamiz) verra l'organisation de journées d'étude où des spécialistes vont se relayer pour apporter leurs expériences et autres points de vue. Il est vrai qu'organiser des secours n'est pas chose aisée, bien au contraire. Or, au moment où les risques majeurs, tant naturels (séismes, glissements de terrain, inondations, incendies) que technologiques augmentent de façon quasi exponentielle, les entreprises algériennes connaissent une situation de crise aiguë. En effet, nul n'ignore la grave préjudice subi. Des centaines d'entreprises ont été détruites, d'autres fléchies, quand elles ne disparaissent pas littéralement. Les "recupées" sont affaiblies. Comment dans ces conditions faire face à des situations de catastrophe ? Tout plan ORSEC, aussi performant soit-il, ne peut se déployer sur le terrain avec des moyens... fléchis !

Ames si en 1980 l'Algérie pouvait mobiliser un très grand nombre d'engins roquants et de levage (bulis, grues, camions) et les faire converger en un temps quasi réel vers El-Hamiz, pourra-t-elle le faire aujourd'hui avec des "reliques d'entreprises" ? Le même "topo" est valable pour les inondations, les incendies ou les glissements de terrain. Sachant que le nord du pays est assis sur une faille et de ce fait, connaît une activité sismique importante. Il est plus que grand temps de tirer la sonnette d'alarme. De plus, le développement anarchique du tissu urbain et des activités industrielles à l'ombre de tout contrôle laisse présager le pire. N'a-t-on pas vu des camions anti-incendie bloqués dans ces labyrinthes que vint les lotissements-champignons ? N'a-t-on pas vu des cités de plusieurs centaines de logements se construire sur des piles de gaz haute pression ? Qui peut affirmer aujourd'hui que les constructions en zone sismique répondent aux normes en vigueur ? Comment vont régir nos cantonniers d'axe à un petit séisme, celles-là mêmes qui en "temps normal" sont à l'origine des "ruiss-connexions" et des milliers de cas de typhoïde ? Comment vont pouvoir circuler les moyens de secours dans des villes aux rues étroites, constamment encombrées et aux "coulées spéciales" qui même s'ils existaient ont été supprimés ? Indéniablement, la situation est grave pour être prise à la légère. La prévention ne peut et ne doit pas être du seul ressort de la protection civile. C'est l'affaire de tous et notamment des médias qui n'ayons pas peur de faire notre mea culpa, nous accordant d'intérêt à ces risques que lors de ces journées ne pas encore... que lorsqu'il y a une catastrophe. ■

Hamid Ziri

newspaper columns, and radio and television programmes should be created to examine and explain all aspects of natural disaster prevention. To end this very interesting day the following recommendations were adopted:

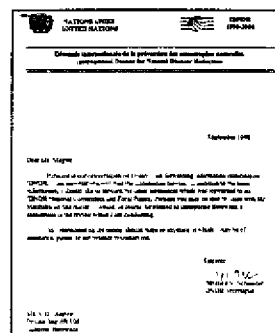
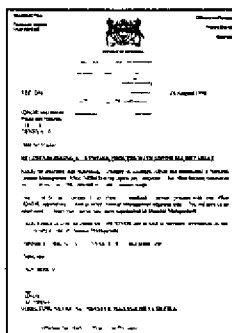
- To encourage knowledge within the written media by introducing a specialised course at the Institute of Information and Communication Sciences on how to run an awareness and prevention campaign,
- To associate the media in promoting measures to prevent disasters,
- To create a reserved space in the insurance newsletter,
- To integrate protection against disasters in regional development and town building,
- To run a media campaign for the Decade and ensure that the work already started will be carried on beyond the year 2000.
- To put together permanent structures to follow the work accomplished during the Decade. These structures should address the issues coming with the next Millenium when disasters may be even more severe and complex.

- A professor of the University of Bab Ezzouar explained the sophisticated technology established to protect the transmediterranean gasoducts (GPL) from fire and accident but noted that a severe earthquake could nevertheless damage the installations.
- Finally, the Director of the revue "Symbiose" and professors of the Institute of the Science of Information and Communications (ISIC) stressed the important role of journalists in the dissemination of information on the prevention of natural disasters. They agreed that new methods of communication should be sought to encourage members of the media to work closely with experts so as to better inform the public.

In the debate which followed the discussions it was suggested by journalists present that special

## BOTSWANA

This country has established a National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) in the capital city of Gaborone.





Placed under the direction of Ms V.D. Mogwe, this office became functional on 1 August 1998. One of the primary interests of the Gaborone office will be to establish a network process with the IDNDR Secretariat, in Geneva, and other Disaster Management Organisations world-wide.

## BURKINA FASO

A National Organisational Committee was put in place to organise activities for World Disaster Reduction Day in 1997. The Committee included representatives from the government, UNDP, the Red Cross, and the District of Boulmiougou. A press kit, documentaries, articles, and publicity spots were produced for the Day. On the Day a sketch entitled "Stop Disasters" was presented by the theatre group Atelier Théâtrale Burkinabé to highlight the role and responsibilities that individuals and communities have in the prevention and management of natural disasters.

On 13 and 14 October 1998, a workshop on the prevention of natural disasters was held in the conference room of the Liptako Gourma Integrated Development Authority.

Under the theme "Media and Natural Catastrophes Prevention – Prevention starts with Information", the workshop aimed at:

- Informing media persons on the various emergency situations, particularly those concerning Burkina Faso;
- identifying strategic targets, supports and messages to be used within the framework of disaster management by the media.
- reminding people of the objectives of the IDNDR;
- encouraging a culture of prevention.

To attain these objectives, a national organisation committee was named under the supervision of the National Emergency Response and Rehabilitation (CONASUR).

The official opening ceremony was presided by the Minister of Social Action and Family. The directors and chiefs of the central services of the ministry as well as representatives from the UNDP, CINU, HCR and CONASUR were also present.

The ceremony included two speeches: Mr. Inoussa Barry, Permanent Secretary of the CONASUR underlined the growing importance of catastrophes, their complexity, their frequency and their impact on the environment. Mrs. Bana Ouandaogo, Minister for Social Action and Family, linked the consequences of catastrophes on the cereal shortfall. The Minister then

### LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

N°	Nom et Prénoms	Fonction	Adresse
1	PALE Ollé	Chef de service	CONASUR
2	ZERBO Z. Salif	Chef de service	CONASUR
3	TIENDREBEOGO Isabelle	Réd. Chef EUREKA	CNRST
4	COULIBALY Léontine	Radio Bobo	BP 392
5	VEBAMBA Sylvain	Radio Maria	31 70 70
6	ZONGO Evariste	AEPILN	BP 1197
7	SANON K. Rigobert	Journal du soir	30 56 51
8	DICKO Abdoulaye	Radio Rurale	32 43 03/04
9	KABORE Martin	Radio Burkina	32 43/03/04
10	PORGO Saïdou	Journal B	31 33 77
11	MAHILET constant	Radio PULSAR	30 75 45
12	POUYA Lazare	Journaliste	31 83 53/63
13	OUEDRAOGO Roch Parfait	Journaliste	32 47 02
14	DOC Assimel	HFM	35 91 91
15	DIALLO Ramata	Cellule IEC	CONASUR
16	WANGRAWA I B	Journaliste	Salankoloko
17	OKA Ursula Magui Leolte	C.A.C	32 41 41/45
18	SAWADOGO Idrissa	Technicien	32 43 01
19	YAMONGBE Morin	Journaliste	« le Pays »
20	BARRY Aluma	Animatrice	31 35 46
21	NGUEL AWANE Michel	Global village B	36 24 73
22	BARRY Inoussa	SP/CONASUR	31 26 29
23	TAPSOBA Pierre	L'observateur Paalga	33 27 05
24	KOFFI Christophe	Agence France Presse	31 56 25
25	DABA Serémé	A.I.B	32 46 39
26	Oumarcou S. CAMARA	A.I.B	32 46 39
27	COULDIATY Antoine Y	Enviro-solidarite	36 49 46
28	BAYALA Oumou	TNB	36 03 96
29	TAPSOBA Bernadette	PAM	30 60 77
30	OUEDRAOGO Charles	Sikwaya	31 22 89
31	OUEDRAOGO N. Laurent	Administrateur	31 26 29
32	LANKOANDE Amphis	A.I.G (Liptako -Gourma)	36 17 47
33	NADBEGA H. Elvis	Radio Bobo	97 14 09
34	SAMBARE Z. Patrice	Croix rouge (Ziguin)	33 20 78
35	KABORE N. Jean-B	INA	36 32 37
36	OUEDRAOGO Rasmone	MEE/DGPF	30 00 22
37	OUEDRAOGO Fernand	Presse/MASF	30 08 75
38	OUEDRAOGO Adama	MCC	30 60 30
39	OUEDRAOGO Moussa	SP/CONASUR	31 26 29
40	SINI Arouna	SP/CONASUR	31 26 29

underlined the importance of the workshop and expected results.

- understanding concepts related to emergencies;
- types of emergencies and response;
- role of the media;
- identification of supports and messages;
- creation and activation of a communication network.

The Minister then proceeded with the official launch of the booklet (written in the three official languages: mooré, dioula and fulfudé) of which 5,000 copies were printed. Acknowledging that prevention means that populations know about the risk zones, and understanding the difficulties that media encounter in accessing information, the workshop recommended in its conclusions:

- that greater attention be given to the identification of risk zones and public awareness, through the media and other means of communication
- that the political and administrative authorities facilitate media access to information.

In Ouagadougou, the International Day was celebrated on 14 October, 1998, together with journalists, communicators and the Information Centre of the United Nations (UNIC).

The National Organisation Committee had given permission for tee-shirts to be made bearing the IDNDR logo, and these made an attractive addition to the Day

The Day's first target was to associate the country's media to the promotion activities in natural disaster reduction. The Day's activities ended by a volleyball game between the Tax & Revenue Directorate Team and the Media Team. Final score 3 – 2 for the Taxes...because of bad communication in the Media Team!

## **CHAD**

In 1998, this country celebrated World Disaster Reduction Day in N'Djamena with the distribution of press kits to the media.

There were special radio programmes, videos and IDNDR posters on display to attract the interest of the population.

## **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (EX-ZAIRE)**

The National Programme for Prevention, Struggle and Humanitarian Assistance to the Victims of Natural Disaster - PRONAPLUCAN – organised a one-month campaign from 15 September -15 October 1997. This campaign was to heighten public awareness on methods of preventing natural disasters from turning into national catastrophes. A film was shown and a debate held in the Meteorology section of the Institut Supérieur de Techniques Appliquées, in Ndolo.

PRONAPLUCAN, together with a women's development support group and a United Nations women's club, visited a community which had been relocated due to flooding in 1990. The UN women's club made a donation of farming tools.

The highlight of this month long campaign was the announcement by the Ministry of Interior that a commission was to be created, within the Ministry, to provide a legal framework for disaster management.

## EGYPT

In 1997, a symposium was organised under the auspices of the Minister for Higher Education, the State Minister for Scientific Research and the Governor of the New Valley Province. Sponsors of this event were, among others, Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT) and the University of Assuit. The subjects under discussion included the loss of arable soil, shifting sand dunes and desertification

The symposium was held at the ASRT's centre in Kharga, New Valley. In addition to scientific exchanges, it emphasised the necessity of increasing public awareness and involving the media.

The Academy and the Red Sea Governorate are funding a project to find the ways and means to protect the Governorate of flash floods and make use of their waters.

## ETHIOPIA

Information on water and disaster prevention was provided to the general public through an article adapted from the World Meteorological Organization, published in the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission's (DPPC) News in September 1997.

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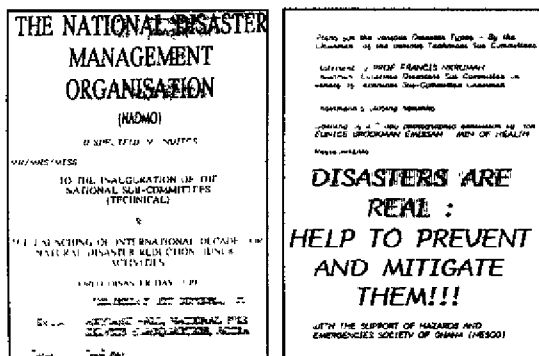
## GHANA

The National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), in Accra, has since its establishment in 1997, been creating awareness of disaster prevention and mitigation among citizens of the country.

NADMO commemorated the World Disaster Reduction Day, in October 1997, with one week of activities including a durbar of chiefs and people, symposia, workshops nation-wide, and the inauguration of the National Technical Sub-committees on Natural Disasters. Popular activities to publicise the day included radio and TV discussions in all main national languages, an itinerant photo exhibition, public meetings and video shows and lectures for secondary schools and emergency services.

1997 was the first year that Ghana celebrated the International Disaster Reduction Day on a national basis and with the participation of various governmental assemblies, the National Disaster Management Organisation, and the Hazard and Emergency Society of Ghana (HESOG). The 1997 Programme paved the way for the National Disaster Management Organisation to be introduced to the people of Ghana and the international community

The 1998 programme of activities to mark the Day was held from 6 - 14 October. These activities included a press conference by the Co-ordinator, NADMO, a television discussion on disaster management on 8 October and a seminar on disaster management for the media on 8-9 October. Also, a simulation exercise took place with the collaboration of the fire service. IDNDR messages on disaster reduction were read in the Mosques on 9 October and in Churches on 11 October



On the 13th, a statement on disaster management was delivered by the Vice President of Ghana, H.E. Prof. J. E. A. Mills and the UN Secretary General's message was read by the UN Resident Representative, Mr Abdoulie Janneh.

In the context of the Campaign, the Minister of Interior and Health, the National Co-ordinator of NADMO, Members of the National Epidemics Sub-Committee visited the cholera infested area in the Dangme East District, in Greater Accra Region. The association of nurses took part in the celebrations.

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President Hazard and Emergency Society of Ghana  
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## KENYA

Material provided by IDNDR proved very popular in Nairobi.

An article in the Weekly Review dated 23 October 1998 called for greater preventive measures against natural disasters to be taken by all levels of society. A higher awareness of hazards was also seen to be necessary. The journal stated that the media could contribute by publishing pertinent information on the subject.

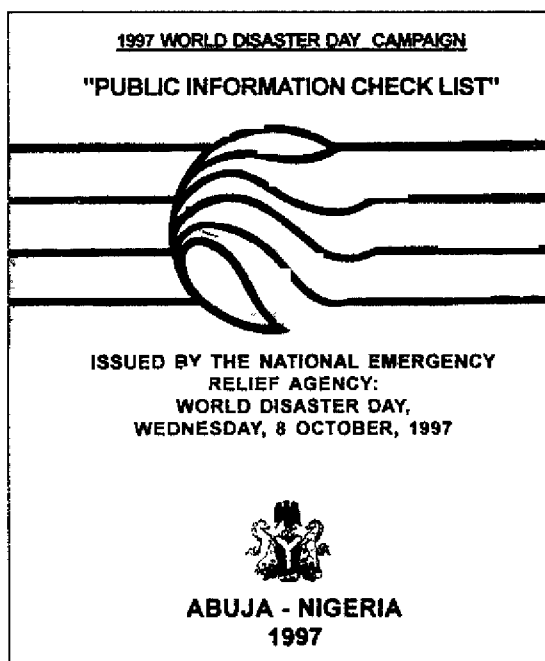
## MADAGASCAR

Various activities were carried out, on the island, on the occasion of the 1998 World Disaster Reduction Day. UNDP reported that the two days of activity to mark the Day were very well received by the public, the media, the Government and the NGOs. The meetings held allowed the principal actors, in case of disaster, to get to know each other better. Posters were displayed and the media attended each event with interest. A workshop on the theme "Prevention begins with information" took place in Antananarivo on 14 October.

## NIGERIA

Until 1996, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) was the focal point of IDNDR activities. In 1997, a rejuvenated National Emergency Relief Agency (NERA) took the initiative and reclaimed its function of Disaster and Crisis Management in Nigeria and has since then been the focal point of IDNDR activities in Nigeria.

In 1997, NERA celebrated the International Day by undertaking such activities as a campaign lecture on the theme "Reducing the Social and Economic Impact of Floods and Drought in Nigeria," with the participation of business, government and environmental community representatives. NERA plans to follow up with periodic seminars and lectures.



## REPUBLIC OF CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE)

A letter received from the office of the Resident Co-ordinator for the Operational Activities of the UN System in Brazzaville, said that in 1998 communication students, from the Department of Sciences and Communication Studies of Marien Ngouabi, were encouraged to write articles on natural hazards, disasters and natural disaster prevention measures in their country.

Two interesting feedbacks were received. One story came from Mr. Gur Milandou Mouanga, a student preparing his master in journalism, and dealt with, "Floods in the Congo: What are the prevention measures?" The second article, from Guy Serge de Mouandza, dealt with the following theme:

"What are the measures to prevent natural disasters in Congo?" His article underlines the fundamental difficulty of providing adequate information since the sources are hidden or non-existent, and concludes that the Department of Sciences and Communication Techniques of the Marien Ngouabi University in Brazzaville should be entrusted with the setting up of a communication and awareness programme aimed at the population at risk.

## RWANDA

In 1998, the UNDP Country Programme Officer, responsible for the Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP), in Kigali, organised an awareness campaign on natural disaster prevention.



## **SOUTH AFRICA**

The Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP), in Pretoria, organised a full programme of activities to celebrate 1998 IDNDR Day. These included.

- Reproduction of the IDNDR poster and distribution to the nine provinces throughout the country.
- Production of a safety kit for fire prevention distributed to communities vulnerable to fires. This was accompanied by a demonstration of its use.
- Production of pamphlets on Fires, Drought, Floods, Storms and Lightning.
- Translation of pamphlets to the different local languages.
- Involvement of emergency services and Disaster Management personnel in various activities around the provinces
- Distribution of material to schools
- Press Conferences with the Minister for Constitutional development and Water Affairs.
- Community gatherings addressed by Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki.
- Radio Broadcast.
- TV Broadcast and a talk show.



*1st prize in the second category of the 1998 photo contest went to Monowar Hossain Akhand showing an evacuation exercise in Bangladesh*