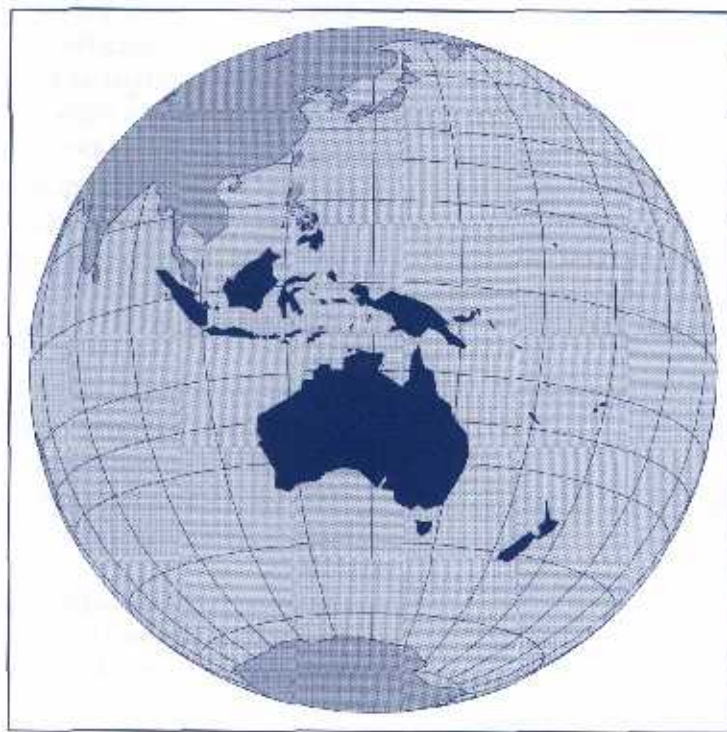


AUSTRALIA & THE PACIFIC STATES



AUSTRALIA

In 1997, the Australian IDNDR Co-ordination Committee sponsored a one-day risk-management seminar and issued a press release for the Day Drought is Australia's costliest natural hazard in economic terms, but floods can also be severe. In 1990 floods covered more than a million square kilometres of eastern Australia and caused about Aus \$415 million damage.

Mr Alan Hodges, Director General of Emergency Management, Australia said: "Insurance payouts reflect only a small percentage of the total damage bill for floods because insurance is not available for domestic properties". Internet sites, where more extensive information could be obtained, proved popular.

NEW ZEALAND

Activities included a news release issued by the weather service to all media

Mr. Bob McDavitt
"Weather Ambassador"
E-mail: Mcd@cybernet.co.nz

REPUBLIC OF PALAU

The Republic's celebration of World Disaster Reduction Day, on 14 October 1998, was a significant success in terms of explaining to the population the need to be aware of potential disasters capable of striking at any given moment.

According to Hazime Telei, Coordinator, National Emergency Management Office, "The

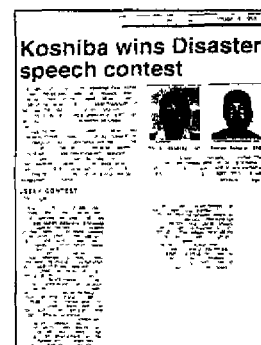
Republic was successful in imparting this year's disaster message, which involved the enlistment of the media as working partners in promoting natural disaster prevention measures".

The Vice-President of the Republic, Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr, created a National Disaster Reduction Day Committee, which had the responsibilities of planning activities that would bring attention to the primary topic. Adds Hazime Telei, "1998's theme greatly influenced the composition of the committee, which included primarily representatives from the media such as newspapers, cable television, AM and FM radio stations and, of course, the National Emergency Management Office". The committee, recognising the limitation on funding for this event, limited the focus of its planning to citizen awareness.

Within this context, activities were narrowed down to the following carefully planned and executed components: viewing of disaster films, radio talk shows, distribution of typhoon safety tips brochures and speech contest.

The speech contest targeting public and private elementary school student was the primary event organised on 14 October.

Out of 19 elementary schools in the country, 14 schools were represented in the speech contest. Winning contestants and their schools were awarded with prizes and certificates from the Vice-President of the Republic.



TONGA

In 1998, the Tonga Red Cross Society organised a full programme of events to promote disaster awareness and prevention. Red Cross youth worked on road crossings for school children throughout the day, and were highly visible in their Red Cross bibs.

A B-roll was shown featuring Mr. Philippe Boullé, Director of the IDNDR Secretariat, as well as footage on disaster prevention shelters in Bangladesh.

Press kits were distributed and a video programme on disaster awareness produced by the Tonga Broadcasting Commission was broadcast.

LN LOTERÍA NACIONAL PARA LA ASISTENCIA PÚBLICA MARTES 7 DE OCTUBRE DE 1997

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Secretaría de Gobernación
Dirección Nacional de Producción (DINAPRO)

Lea aviso importante al reverso

AMERICAS & THE CARIBBEAN



- include the Day in school agendas
- reproduce posters locally
- maintain a website
- encourage earlier availability of resource material for longer exposure
- disseminate calendar of activities

The UNDP Resident Coordinator hosted a breakfast and a workshop on natural disaster prevention for 50 senior policy and decision-makers. Key contacts were established between relevant ministries and NGOs during the breakfast to improve coordination in the event of a catastrophe. A Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) video was shown on the 1993 floods in Bolivia's Beni region, caused by El Niño.

UNDP Country Office
Tel: (591-2) 362-646
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Email: mpsalas@isis.pnud.bo

In 1997 the Montserrat volcano forced many people to leave their island and some of them sought shelter in the British Virgin Islands. The BVI community raised funds to assist them. From 6 - 10 October, radio programmes publicised the Day. A radio quiz on station ZBVI, and a panel discussion on ZBVI's Speak Out were broadcast.

A supplement was printed in both BVI newspapers. A Multi-Hazard Contingency Planning Training course was organised by the BVI Office of Disaster Preparedness in conjunction with the Ministry of Education.

The 3-day course was held between 7-10 October 1998 and was attended by the 15 teachers from around the Territory. Recommendations of participants were:

- That the establishment of contingency planning in schools cannot only be the responsibility of teachers.

Multi-Hazard Contingency Planning Course

Organized by
the BMF Office of Disaster Preparedness

As part of the ODP's Earthquake Awareness Campaign, a Multi-Hazard Contingency Planning Course was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. The main objective of the course was to expose school personnel to general knowledge on natural hazards (earthquakes, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis as well as fire and gas leaks) and their impact, and in the basic principles of disaster management and preparedness. Another main objective of the course was to train school personnel and give them the basic theoretical and practical knowledge and experience to face natural hazards and protect themselves and their school facilities' students and information.

The three day course was conducted by Mr. Arturo Lopez-Panillo of Mexico from May -10th through 1998. The participants consisted of about 15 teachers from schools around the Territory.

The course also aimed to train the participants in multi-hazard contingency planning so they would:

- Have adequate tools for contingency planning against the above mentioned hazards, thus protecting the school students, teachers, administrative personnel as well as information
- Understand the perishes and impacts of the main hazards that threaten schools and their personnel.
- Understand and assess contingency procedures against these hazards and
- Know and promote amongst students, their families and their communities the main protective actions they should consider in the case of threat or presence of these hazards.

THE MAIN GENERAL EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING COURSE.

Organization, facilities and equipment:
The training course was very well organized by the Office of Disaster Preparedness.

Participants.

Although the training course was initially planned for 30 participants, only 15 attended, nevertheless, it did not affect the development of the training course as the continuity allowed a more active participation of the attendees.

The group was a homogeneous one and a very active one. They all asked questions and gave opinions and shared experiences. It must be stated that the group was an excellent one. They all achieved the maximum objective, they all were motivated and involved and they all were very cooperative and always in a good mood all along the training course.

TRAINING COURSE OUTCOMES

Human resources:
It can be said that all the participants are ready to implement contingency planning activities within the school, as they have the general knowledge about hazards, vulnerability and prevention. The theory planning procedures cannot be taught without working with a hypothetical school and they can now apply the knowledge gained in their own schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The establishment of contingency planning organizations in schools and the implementation of the theory planning procedures cannot be the responsibility of only teachers. They need the support of the principals, school owners and the Ministry of Education under the supervision of ODP. A resolution must be issued by the Ministry of Education jointly with ODP stating that all the schools within the Territory must have a contingency planning organization and adopt and execute contingency planning procedures.
- The regulation must include the steel contingency planning organizational schools must adopt and the contingency planning procedures they must develop in case of an emergency. They must be the same for all schools.
- ODP has to review and finally decide on the typical organization, contingency planning procedures and other activities schools must adopt and execute permanently and in the case of an emergency.
- More Multi-Hazard Contingency Planning Training Courses have to be delivered in order to train personnel from the Ministry of Education, school principals and teachers. This can be done by ODP or by a consultant.
- Other training activities have to be implemented on the previous training courses to have been delivered: fire control (use of fire extinguishers) and first aid. These training courses can be simple and perhaps 3 or 4 hours in length at the most.
- Activities performed by school contingency planning organizations have to be supervised and evaluated by ODP regularly, especially simulation exercises.
- A networked programme must be designed and developed for the implementation of contingency planning organizations within all schools in the SUI.
- The programme can be extended to other facilities (banks, shopping centres, company water supply company, libraries, and all the governmental buildings to ensure they will not be left with the least

date 27 May 1998

"No matter in Progress and Present replace them with Progress and Present" *St. Thomas 1928*

- More Multi-Hazard Contingency and other Training Courses must be planned.
- A nation-wide programme must be developed for the implementation of contingency planning.

IDNDR DAY 1998 - 14 OCTOBER 1998 **Message from the Chairman of the NEAC** **"Prevention Begins with Information"**

NEAC NEWS

Volume 3 No. 3
 November 1998

IDNDR DAY 1998 - 14 October, 1998
Message From the Chairman of the NEAC

"Prevention begins with information"

There is more than a truism - it has proven its worth here at the Virgin Islands over the past 15 years. It can be truthfully argued that the lion's share of the resources used up in our disaster preparedness programme over that period has gone into providing information to the people of these islands: to school children and their teachers, to community groups, to government officials and politicians and to the public at large. In the endeavour, we have used all of the media available: the printed and spoken word, newsletters, magazines, special booklets for schools, videos, broadcasts, and radio programmes. We do not believe that an informed community is a community more able to practice prevention and reduction of disaster.

But this is a continuing struggle. New persons come on the scene all the time - the target. So the delivery of information has to be continual. New and creative ways must always be sought to get across the messages that will help to build a culture of prevention. Because of that information stream, and the experience of real events, we are beginning to see changes in the thinking and behaviour of individuals and groups. This is the cultural change which we seek.

Disaster reduction is based on strong commitment and participation by all components of the society at risk. The private sector, and electronic, have demonstrated their understanding of the importance of their role in transmitting disaster information. I am sure that this public preparedness will continue. Through the Public Education Sub-Committee of the NEAC, chaired by the Chief Information Officer, the media houses bring to bear their own disaster preparedness and management.

The Government Department of Information and Public Relations co-ordinates the entire effort and provides leadership in this vital area. The community owes a debt of gratitude to them all.

Prepared by the Office of Disaster Preparedness

"It is better to Prepare and Prevent rather than Regret and Repair" - A. Thomas, 1976

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

It is the short time that I have been in the BVI that I have already been impressed with the high level of preparedness in the ODP and the professionalism of all the staff who work there.

I first visited the ODP in June 1993 during a formalization visit to BVI before starting my term as Governor of Montserrat. I leave a good deal from the then head of the ODP, Jennifer Warren, and I subsequently introduced many of the systems she had in place here when we opened the Government Operations Centre in Montserrat in January 1995. Their systems saved Montserrat in good stead when the volcano erupted on 18 July 1995.

Between my first visit in 1993 and the present time the ODP, under the guidance of the Deputy Governor, Ebon Georges OBE, and the day-to-day control of Donovan Georges, has gone with strength and insight and is now rightly regarded as a regional centre of excellence. The BVI Government and the entire community can be justifiably proud of the standards set by the staff of the ODP. The preparations for Hurricane Georges were excellent and the co-ordination of all various emergency agencies in the BVI from the ODP operations room went first class.

But the only thing for certain in the business of disaster preparedness is that it is not possible to plan in great detail for every type of emergency. What would BVI look like after Hurricane Georges if it had reached category 4? What would have happened if Hurricane Wilma had struck the Virgin Islands instead of Honduras? The challenge for the ODP in 1999 is to take the state of preparedness to even higher levels of excellence. If there is any tendency towards complacency in the wider community in the BVI, the harrowing TV reports from Honduras and Nicaragua should serve as an urgent reminder that disaster preparedness is not only for the Government, but for each person in the BVI. Everybody has their role to play if the BVI is to meet the challenge of natural and man-made disasters in the region.

Congratulations to all those working in Disaster Preparedness on a job well done in 1998 but continue to be vigilant.

F. J. Savage
 Governor

CANADA

In 1998, a special World Disaster Reduction Day event was convened by the IDNDR National Committee for Canada and discussions were held with groups that included participation by teachers, psychologists, and natural disaster experts. They met in a school located in an area of western Canada that had suffered from floods. The Director of the IDNDR Secretariat, Mr. Philippe Boullé,

participated in the awards ceremony, when special certificates were presented to students.

On 14 October, the Canadian National Committee-International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (CNC-IDNDR) marked the 1998 World Disaster Reduction campaign with a breakfast meeting of Members of Parliament, media and key individuals in the emergency preparedness community.

Over 50 people attended the breakfast, which was held at the National Press Club in Ottawa on the 1998 Campaign theme. The aim was two-fold: to focus on efforts to create a national programme and supporting strategy to reduce the devastating effects of natural disasters in Canada and to encourage the media as working partners in promoting natural disaster prevention measures.

Speakers at the event were:

- Jean-Pierre Wallot, President Royal Society of Canada (Welcoming remarks)
- Alain Davenport, chair, CNC-IDNDR, and representing the Canadian Academy of Engineering (CNC Initiatives beyond the Decade)
- André Tremblay, Acting executive Director, Emergency Preparedness Canada (the need for a Natural Disaster Mitigation Programme for Canada)
- John Stone, Director General, Policy, Programme and International Affairs, Atmospheric Environment Service, Environment Canada (Global Change and Natural Disaster Mitigation)
- Richard Haworth, Director General, Sedimentary and Marine Geo-science Branch, Geological Survey of Canada, Natural Resources Canada (The impact of climate change)

Long-term weather forecast: havoc

Ice Storm '98, among history's costliest natural disaster per capita, just tip of the iceberg

By [illegible]

The ice storm that hit the Great Lakes region in January 1998 was just the tip of the iceberg, according to a report by a panel of experts convened by the National Academy of Sciences. The panel, which met in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 10-11, said that the ice storm was part of a larger trend of extreme weather events that are becoming more frequent and severe. The panel's report, "Extreme Weather Events: Understanding the Chances," was released on Feb. 12. It says that the ice storm was part of a larger trend of extreme weather events that are becoming more frequent and severe. The panel's report, "Extreme Weather Events: Understanding the Chances," was released on Feb. 12. It says that the ice storm was part of a larger trend of extreme weather events that are becoming more frequent and severe.

Storms: National conference on disasters set for December

Continued from page A1

"That raises the potential for damage in the event of a weather-related disaster, a economic prosperity. With the population generally wealthier than it has been in the past, we've got more things to be damaged."

He said infrastructure, often neglected by governments at all levels, stands that there has been little re-investment in change such as sewer systems. As a result, many systems are deteriorating and inadequate to meet present demands.

Climate change. "There is an increasing risk that the weather is changing, and that some aspects of that change are leading to more severe weather than we've ever seen," said Mr. Kovacs.

While the full implications of climate change have yet to be determined, most Canada modelling supports the view that Canadians can expect more episodes of extreme weather in the next few decades, said John Stone, Re-

Affairs.

Historically, weather-related claims have accounted for only about two per cent of all insurance claims, said Mr. Kovacs. That figure has now risen to eight per cent.

Mr. Kovacs said weather-related claims "are not big enough yet that we've had to seriously look at the cost of insurance," but warned that that could change if costs continue to rise.

The insurance industry is worried enough that it established the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction earlier this year. Its mission is to explore ways to reduce the loss of life and property caused by severe weather and earthquakes.

In co-operation with Emergency Preparedness Canada, the Institute has spent the last few months holding workshops across the country with representatives of the government, the private sector, non-profit groups and academics to develop a framework to mitigate natural disaster risks.

crises in the country," said Mr. Kovacs. While there is no agreement on what to do, he said there was broad consensus among workshop participants that investments are needed to mitigate the damage caused by natural disasters when they occur.

Mr. Kovacs said these investments can be very cost effective. "A small investment, initially, can lead to major savings down the road."

For example, the insurance industry has spent \$5 million a year for the past three years to divert hurricanes away from Calgary using cloud-seeding techniques. As a result, he said, "the damage caused by hail in Calgary has gone down remarkably."

The consultation will culminate in a national conference in Toronto on Dec. 2, at which the results of the workshops will be reported to federal and provincial ministers. Emergency Preparedness Canada is expected to be empowered to investigate measures to reduce the damage caused by

select group of specialists in news management, journalism, NGOs, and industry to discuss the role of the media in natural disaster. The group examined lessons learned, case studies and best practices from recent research.

Participants underlined the increasing severity of natural disasters and the changes in the weather: higher heat in summer, colder days in winter and more violent winter storms and their impact on the sea level, the permafrost, ground water and of course on agriculture and infrastructure.

- Paul Kovacs, Executive Director, Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction, Insurance Bureau of Canada (Acting before the disaster)
- Kathryn White, President, Black and White Communications Inc. (Building Partnerships: Youth, Media, and Industry)

Following the breakfast meeting, CNC-IDNDR member Kathryn White and her Risk & Society Project hosted a roundtable on The Media and Public Trust. This Roundtable brought together a

COLUMBIA

A 15-second public awareness announcement concerning water was broadcast at various times of the day over national television from October to December 1997. A video entitled "Let's Prevent Floods" was sent to 32 regional disaster prevention and education committees for broadcast in all municipalities. 10,000 educational flyers, "Calltarin el Arroyo Feliz y Mi Amiga el Agua", were printed and distributed to the regional committees for local distribution to institutions, community and educational authorities.

"La prevencion es una Responsabilidad de Todos" of the municipality of Medellin organised a seminar on 11 October 1998 on the Prevention of Natural Disasters with 4 main themes:

- The seismic risks in cities and seismic micro-zoning projects.
- Communications resources for the prevention of disasters,
- Social networks in prevention of disasters,
- Intervention in the case of emergencies.

Roundtable:
the Media and Public Trust

Participants

Mark Bulgach
Executive Producer, CBC-TV, Newsworld, Live Programming

John Bordessa
News Coordinator, CTCAC Radio, Montreal

Patrick Cyr
Programming Manager, Rogers Cable, Ottawa

Christopher Dumas
Director, School of Journalism, Carleton University

Lynn Haddrell
Editor, Kingston Wing-Standard

Scott Haggart
Executive Producer, News, CIGN-TV (CTV) Ottawa

Phil Jenkins
Location Manager, CBC-TV, Ottawa

Emmanuelle La Traversie
Anchor, CHOT-TV, Hull

Tom Moorshead
Senior Vice President, Operations, Paterson-The Weather Network

Joan Mulvihill
National Director, Field Operations, Red Cross

Don Butler
Executive Editor, The Ottawa Citizen

Dennis Yrdes
Anchor, NewsWatch, CBC-TV, Montreal

Michael Vincent
News Director, CTCAC-Radio, Montreal

Rubin Walsh
Media Relations Officer, Canadian International Development Agency

Kathryn White
President, Black & White Communications Inc.

RISK & Society
RISQUES & Société

A Un
Schools project
Project school

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is a leading international organization of the United Nations system, dedicated to the well-being of children. It is the largest provider of humanitarian aid in the world.

UNICEF is a non-profit organization. It is not a government agency. It is not a religious organization. It is not a political organization. It is not a commercial organization. It is not a charitable organization. It is not a social organization. It is not a cultural organization. It is not a sports organization. It is not a health organization. It is not a education organization. It is not a environment organization. It is not a human rights organization. It is not a peace organization. It is not a development organization. It is not a social justice organization. It is not a human development organization. It is not a human rights organization. It is not a peace organization. It is not a development organization. It is not a social justice organization. It is not a human development organization.

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Mr. Gregoria Marulanda Brito
Director General National Directory for
Disaster Prevention and "ATENCION"
Calle 26 No. 13-19 PISO 26
Santafe de Bogota, D.C.
Tel 283-4966
Fax: 286-0485

COSTA RICA

In 1998, 14 NGOs and government institutions conducted an all-day fair in San Jose's Central Park. Primary and secondary schools watched demonstrations on disaster preparedness and all the events were well covered by the media

Civil protection professionals chose a school in San Jose as a site for a publicised emergency

drill. The Ministry of Public Education has included emergency evacuation drills in public school curricula since 1991.

The National Emergency Commission organised:

- A National Seminar on Journalism and Disasters
- A workshop in the Nicoya Peninsula on Information and Vulnerability.
- A national information campaign.


A weekly programme will now be broadcast on National Radio and Channel 13 will broadcast spots about disasters prevention and response.

For more information contact:

National Emergency Commission

Tel: (506) 220-2064

cnemerens.caspares.go.cr



United Nations
Department of
Humanitarian Affairs

International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction
IDNDR
1990-2000
Building a Culture of Prevention

Communities Manage Early Warning Flood System in Costa Rica, Saving Lives

A comparison of early warning for floods in summer 1996 and July 1997 shows how good public information and a plan for local involvement makes the difference. After early warning was acted upon - saving lives and property in 1996 - the impact was among unnecessary damage and loss of life in 1997.

In 1996, the Costa Rican government, in cooperation with the United Nations, implemented a flood warning system in the San Jose area. The system was based on a network of volunteers who monitored the river levels and reported them to the authorities. This allowed the authorities to issue early warnings to the public, who then evacuated their homes and businesses to higher ground. As a result, there was no loss of life and minimal damage to property.

In 1997, however, the system was not as effective. The volunteers were not as well trained, and the authorities did not issue early warnings in time. As a result, there was significant damage to property and loss of life.

The success of the 1996 system was due to several factors. First, the volunteers were well trained and had a clear understanding of their role. Second, the authorities were able to issue early warnings in time. Third, the public was well informed and followed the instructions.

The 1997 system failed for several reasons. First, the volunteers were not as well trained. Second, the authorities did not issue early warnings in time. Third, the public was not as well informed and did not follow the instructions.

The Costa Rican government is now working to improve the system. This includes training more volunteers, improving the communication system, and increasing public awareness.

Do people pay attention to early warning?

All countries have early warning systems, and most of them have been successful. The key to success is to ensure that the public is well informed and follows the instructions.

Costa Rica's Disaster Profile, with a Focus on Floods

Costa Rica, with a population of 2.6 million and a territory of 52,000 km², is a country that is highly vulnerable to natural disasters. The country's geographical location, topography and the history of its socio-economic development all contribute to make Costa Rica highly vulnerable to floods, landslides, earthquakes and other hazards.

From a meteorological point of view, the hurricane season and the country's location in the tropical convergence zone bring major rainfall to different areas of the country. Geographically, the extreme variation in altitude between the mountains and the coast, as well as the great abundance of rivers, cause frequent flood-related emergencies, aggravated by the effects of deforestation and pollution on river basins.

In 1998, the country was affected by several hydro-meteorological events that caused millions of dollars in losses in large areas of the national territory. The government, already struggling to cope with a serious budget deficit, was forced to come up with considerable additional resources to provide the services, rehabilitation and reconstruction required after each emergency.

In 1997, the El Niño phenomenon, in conjunction with the normal seasonal rains in the region, have led to several floods, mainly on the Atlantic coast.

For more information, please contact: International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Tel: (41)22 796 66 94; Fax: (41)22 733 34 94; Email: info@idn-dr.org

CUBA

Architecture students attended lectures on disaster management, hazards, vulnerability and disaster reduction planning. The first National Workshop for Disaster Reduction Engineering and Architecture was scheduled for October 1998.

Civil Defence

Fax: (53-7) 332-780 or PREMIDES

Email: llanes@cecat.ispjae.edu.cu

ECUADOR

A seminar was organised by the IDNDR Secretariat, Ecuador's National Civil Defence Directorate and the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) between 29 September and 1 October 1998 in Quito

The objectives of the seminar were to promote the dissemination of preventive messages, encourage the exchange of experiences, and define which tools can help journalists and other social communicators understand and convey the importance of disaster reduction.

Subjects on the agenda included:

- duty of experts, authorities and others in ensuring that information about risks is passed on to the general public,
- role of a "communicator" as a bridge, able to synthesise information and present it to the public so it is easily understood, without distortion of its technological contents,
- population must be made aware of the risks threatening them, particularly in the area where they live,
- need to establish communication strategies, from the top to bottom and vice versa, but also horizontally, in case of disaster, including warnings and urgent communication.

**La Planificación de la Información Pública
Fenómeno El Niño**

(Trabajo de grupos Taller Regional sobre Comunicación Social y Prevención de Desastres)

El Niño, es un fenómeno natural con características recurrentes, los mayores daños han sido consecuencia de su presencia en los años 1982-83 y 1997-98; su ciclo de ocurrencia no es preciso, su su magnitud ni tamaño. La mayoría de los daños que ocasiona, son en zonas costeras, aunque también en zonas interiores se sienten sus efectos. Considerando que los gobiernos tanto nacionales como locales, son responsables de establecer y ejecutar acciones de protección, que involucren a organizaciones públicas, privadas y sociales para la salvaguarda de la población, expuestas a riesgos naturales, es recomendable lo siguiente:

1. Elaborar un diagnóstico que permita evaluar el nivel de conocimientos y percepción que la población expuesta tiene, sobre el riesgo que la amenaza, su vulnerabilidad y características específicas (tamaño de la población, condiciones socio-políticas-culturales-económicas, costumbres, idiosyncrasy; así como la capacidad físico-mental, entre otras).
2. Planear y ejecutar una estrategia de comunicación que involucre a especialistas, técnicos, académicos o sea, la población meta y sobre todo a los medios de comunicación con cobertura en las zonas en estudio, que promueva la suficiente divulgación de los riesgos, así como las medidas de mitigación, prevención y preparación, promoviendo la creación de fuentes confiables de información.
3. Promover la elaboración e implementación de programas específicos de prevención y atención de emergencias locales, los cuales incluyan en su estructura un área de comunicación social, que asegure la permanencia y evaluación de las estrategias y medidas preventivas de mitigación y respuesta.
4. La información a propagar debe asegurar la efectiva divulgación de la organización local de prevención, mitigación y respuesta, así como promover el desarrollo de habilidades y conductas más adecuadas en la población, propiciando el establecimiento de una cultura local de prevención y preparación, contando para ello con la participación de dependencias y organismos, con responsabilidad en ella, como: escuelas, universidades, desarrollo urbano y comunitario, salud, entre otras instituciones con injerencia en la materia.
5. Considerar a los medios de comunicación, como uno de los ejes centrales para ejecutar estrategias de comunicación colectiva y establecer medios alternativos que permitan cumplir con los objetivos trazados (formación y capacitación de líderes comunitarios, aprovechamiento de organizaciones existentes en cada comunidad, realización de seminarios-talleres, difusión de folletos, manuscritos, entre otros).

Conclusions:

- agree to determine strategies that will incorporate the theme of prevention within the contents of the media
- agree to determine communication strategies to prevent disasters.
- agree to establish permanent relationships between all concerned parties engaged in collective communication.

A major newspaper, El Comercio, published a series of preventive articles after the seminar.

"Prevention starts with information, and communication for prevention is a complex process that requires united action from many professionals from many disciplines, where the media professionals are the axis of union. A regional workshop was held in Quito Social Communication in Disaster Prevention from 29 September to 1 October 1998, with the aim to promote regional and national actions to improve the information flow to the population. ."

Extracts from a note of the Civil Defence in Ecuador

EL SALVADOR

A week long programme of events were organised to mark the week of 12-16 October 1998.

These included:

- A first response course in case of incidents with dangerous substances (technological disasters).
- Press Conference on IDNDR.
- Panel Forum on Communication and Disaster Reduction.
- A training session for superior officers of the Armed Forces of El Salvador on disaster reduction.
- Panel Forum on "Disaster preparedness begins with communication".

- Cinema Forum on "TWISTE" early warning systems.
- The delivery of medal of honour of Civil Protection to outstanding Salvadorians within the National Emergency System.

HONDURAS

The city of Choluteca was selected as the 1997 Campaign headquarters in order to promote greater awareness of disaster prevention outside the capital city. The Inter-Institutional Technical Group for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction affiliated with the Permanent Emergency Committee (COPECO), organised activities including a parade, lectures, demonstrations of rescue equipment and techniques, cultural activities and a press conference.

JAMAICA

In 1997, a one week awareness programme was held, with training sessions and presentations in different locations around the country. A radio interview with Helena Molin Valdes, IDNDR's Regional Officer, was heard on one of the most popular morning talk shows. Flyers emphasising the problem of drought were distributed through a daily newspaper.

MEXICO

In celebration of the International Day in 1997, the National Civil Protection issued a special set of lottery tickets which included important information on disaster preparedness.

Mexico broadcast a national message throughout the country in order to explain and emphasize the importance of disaster prevention. The Mexican Red Cross produced an emergency information wall chart.

NICARAGUA

The Nicaragua Civil Defence Directorate appointed a special committee to plan and carry out activities related to World Disaster Reduction Day. Among those involved in the activities were the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, NGOs; the Nicaraguan Institute for Territorial Studies (INETER) and the Ministry of Education.

There were demonstrations and discussions with the National Red Cross, and the fire brigade gave fire fighting demonstrations. Moreover, there were earthquake simulation exercises in schools. The 1997 World Disaster Reduction Day on 8 October marked the 25th anniversary of the 1972 earthquake.

PANAMA

In 1997, a series of lectures and seminars were organised by government and the private sector; students competed in a public speaking contest on disaster reduction as part of a plan for civil protection in schools. All activities were widely covered by the media.

A private bank (DISA) financed the publication of a book, "Civil Protection: Manual for Disasters." A special set of national lottery tickets was printed to commemorate World Disaster Reduction Day, which was launched at an exhibition prepared by the Civil Protection. In October 1998 the Civil Protection hosted a conference on the role of the Media in Civil Protection.

PARAGUAY

The Day in 1998 was celebrated with no less than two weeks of events organised by the municipality of Asuncion, the universities, UNDP (supported by IDNDR) and the Union of Journalists.

The main activities were:

- Photo exhibit on "Emergency and Disaster situations in Paraguay".
- Seminar/Workshop over two days on Prevention Begins with Information.
- Roundtable on "the Role of Social Communication and Reduction of Disaster of Impact", hosted by UNDP.
- Public participation in the IDNDR Internet Conference. Open House at UNDP, as most people and institutions in Paraguay have no access to Internet. UNDP had open house so that people could review the Website of IDNDR/ QuipuNet.
- Public Conference Speech on "Citizen Participation in Emergencies".
- Discussion at the UN information centre on the topic of emergencies and disaster reduction.

Among the Participants:

Municipalities from the capital, Voluntary Firemen, Magazines, University Students, Various Institutions (Committee for National Emergency, DIBEN, Civil Defence of San Carlos – Brazil, Journalists Unions of Paraguay) local radios

(Trinidad and San Pablo, Pastoral Social) Hydrological and Meteorological Departments of the National Defence, Interdisciplinary Centre of Social Law, Economy and Political Studies Peace Corps, Local Emergencies Organisations, Local Committees of the most threatened zones.

Some conclusions:

- Creation of a single information system for the prevention of disasters and mass media.
- Creation of a follow up committee that will hold its first meeting after 14 October. The Municipality of Asuncion will organise this. The National Directorate for Charity has offered its human resources.
- Empowerment of concerned media and social agents, at the national and regional level.
- Introduction of a course in the Communication Sciences Degree curriculum dealing with the subject of prevention and mitigation of disasters.
- Promotion of knowledge and information exchange through seminars, workshops and access to Internet.

PERU

Seminars and roundtables were organised in different parts of the country in 1998. The recent impact of El Niño on Peru served as a case study to review how campaigns and media contributed to mitigate the disaster.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

An Emergency Planning and Management Workshop for Industrial Disasters was held from October 8-10, 1997, in Port of Spain. A book was produced illustrating how heavy industry can be a partner in natural disaster management.

This is an extract:

"Trinidad and Tobago, an island state, may not have a nuclear reactor but it does have world-scale heavy industry, inevitably near the sea, where gases, chemicals, minerals and ores are processed."

The workshop was convened by the National Emergency Management Agency and the Pan-American Health Organisation/World Health Organisation, with the University of the West Indies Centre for Environmental Studies, and the United Nations Development Programme. It produced a large, handy collection of the participants' own emergency planning documents and shop-floor emergency notices. Government can take a leading role in ensuring that industry invests in high safety standards and develops effective and rapid emergency response.

"Our way to deal with the situation is to bring the emergency plans out in the open and set up lines of communication between those in power, and those who hold the purse strings." Brig. Joseph Theodore, Minister of National Security, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Industry can reinforce its storage tanks and drill its fire brigades, but it cannot control nature, according to Col. Mahendra Mathur. "No matter how good a mitigation and response plan an industry has, there is always a possibility of a natural disaster or human error triggering technological disaster"

Disaster reduction does not end at the plant walls:

"The plan also provides for the co-ordination between the company and external agencies for the further protection of our employees and property, as well as that of the surrounding community and environment."

Extract from: Emergency Management Plan

UNITED STATES

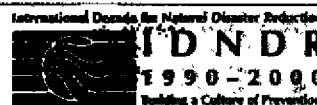
In 1997, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) prepared and disseminated an information package and a press release on the theme of the Campaign. The US education effort was particularly focused on flooding, droughts, hurricanes, severe storms, landslides, mudflows, wildfires and tsunamis. The 1998 Campaign theme was targeted at schools. Also on 14 October 1998, the University of North Texas organized a roundtable on Media and Disaster Prevention.

For more information contact:

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United Nations
Department of
Humanitarian Affairs



European Floods in 1997

The following examples relate to the floods which took place in the summer of 1997 around the river Oder in Poland, the Czech Republic and Germany. They concentrate on the economic impact of the floods in the region and on the ensuing tripartite political initiative for cooperation regarding flood prevention in the future.

Flood Damages in Poland and the Czech Republic

First estimates of the economic impacts of the floods of the century.

The consequences of the floods in the Czech Republic and Poland have significant economic impacts, even if they are not entirely quantifiable, yet. In both countries the disaster is linked to the problematic issues of state finances and monetary policies, as additional credits have to be taken in a financial situation which is already tense.

The Czech Ministry for Industry estimates the damages for industry alone to be of around 1 billion German marks. The coal and steel producers have been especially hard hit in the area. The overall economic damages in the Czech Republic, which include damages to agriculture, transport and general production delays are roughly estimated to be between 2 and 4 billion German marks. In both countries, related costs in the telecommunication and insurance sectors are estimated to be even higher. On the other hand many private homes and companies were not adequately insured.

Minor GDP impacts

According to first economic estimates and to Vladimir Kopecký, director of the Czech paper "Prace ekonomie", the net economic impact on the increase of this year's GDP in the Czech Republic will be slightly negative, but not substantial. The losses for industrial production and by the construction sector will be compensated by extra clean up and construction work. Further analysis is expected from Warsaw.

The biggest challenge remains the damages which private citizens have had to cope with. In both countries, there are not enough budget reserves to compensate the victims and both states have made changes to their domestic budget in emergency sessions.

The Polish parliament has amended a law which now allows the government to borrow up to the equivalent of 1 billion German marks from the National Bank.

As for the Czech Republic, the government has vowed to unblock the equivalent of around 500 million German marks.

Conflicts with Monetary Policies

Both states base the financing of these extra expenditures through "Additional Costs" and not through so-called flood taxes. But this way both countries are in conflict with their policies of stabilisation. Whereas the Czech national bank is following a policy of high interest rates, the Polish national bank had urged the Polish government to restrict the increasing state deficit. In both countries it is expected now that the measures adopted following the flood disaster will create even tighter monetary restrictions. Interest rates will most probably go further up, according to Hannu Gronkiewicz-Waltz, President of the Polish national bank.

These restrictions have made the stocks and bonds market insecure and have made foreign investors very hesitant. This may have contributed to the recent setbacks at the stock exchanges in Prague and Warsaw and to the diminishing value of the Polish zloty and the Czech crown.