

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Summaries and Analysis

Report on 1995 Day for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

Women and Children: Key to Prevention



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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 Secretariat 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.

NOTE

This report reflects all contributions received by March 1996. Reports received subsequently are not relected; however, information they have provided will be passed upon request to those seeking specific contacts on issues related to women and children.

Preface

Why Celebrate IDNDR Day?

Each year, countries around the world conduct a natural disaster awareness campaign. Celebrated each year in the 1990s on the second Wednesday of October, the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR Day) is an opportunity to let people know how they can protect themselves against natural disasters.

People often reflect on the tragic nature of disasters, and ways they could prevent loss of lives, homes and livelihoods, *after* disasters strike. IDNDR Day is an opportunity to highlight concerns about disasters *before* the next disaster strikes. It provides a platform to exchange information, launch new initiatives, publicize legislation and feature programmes that make people less vulnerable to disasters.

In summary, participating in IDNDR Day campaigns can:

- Raise **awareness** about country-specific hazards (or regions, or communities);
- Promote **policies** about natural disaster management;
- Provide **visibility** for successful projects and measures that protect communities.

Successful National Campaigns

IDNDR Day 1995 was the most successful of any such campaign to date. Roughly three times as many organizations reported IDNDR Day activities as in 1994. More roundtables and conferences addressed the IDNDR Day theme than in any previous campaign. International wire services and national newspapers covered the issue more than in the past. The new booklet, **Learning About Natural Disasters**, played a major role in the 1995 campaign, with over 150,000 copies distributed, 50,000 more in demand, and requests for translation in 25 languages.

The 1995 theme was "Women and Children Key to Prevention". Countries celebrated this theme and other disaster reduction activities with national stamps, posters, phone cards,

videoconferences, ministerial messages, neighbourhood gatherings, parades, information briefings for schools, radio quizzes, "open house" days, exhibits, simulation exercises, and contests for drawing, writing and poetry.

How to Use This Report

The purposes of this report are three:

- **Acknowledge and thank contributing organizations.** Hundreds of organizations around the world use IDNDR Day to raise awareness about how we can make communities safer from natural disasters. These organizations in turn each reach hundreds or thousands of people with their activities. Creativity, hard work and persistence are a hallmark of the work of IDNDR Day organizers, against a backdrop of limited resources. These people are a backbone for building a "culture of prevention" in their communities, and a key to making disaster reduction sustainable and integrated beyond the year 2000.
- **Exchange ideas and contacts for future IDNDR Days.** Summaries of IDNDR activities are arranged alphabetically by country, followed by international and regional activities. A list of contact addresses at the back of this report provide the basis for networking. IDNDR Day organizers are pleased to see their work adapted and used by others, and happy to make new contacts in the process. A goal of this report is stimulate further exchange and networking among those interested in reducing the impact of disasters.
- **Apply "Lessons Learned" to future IDNDR Days, advocacy campaigns, and public information aspects of disaster reduction programmes.** Many participating organizations provided feedback and comments about their own work, as well as the campaign coordination work of the IDNDR Secretariat. This report contains an analysis of the successes and gaps of the 1995 campaign, and how IDNDR partners can capitalize on these learnings for the future.

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Analysis of the 1995 Campaign

This section has four parts: it outlines the 1995 campaign elements, notes its successes, analyzes the "lessons learned" and suggests new approaches for future campaigns.

1. Organization of the 1995 Campaign

The theme, target audiences, channels and mediums, and key messages are outlined below.

1. Theme

Women and Children -- Key to Prevention was chosen to complement other major UN initiatives in 1995: the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and the 50th anniversary of the United Nations (which placed a strong emphasis on children).

2. Target Audiences

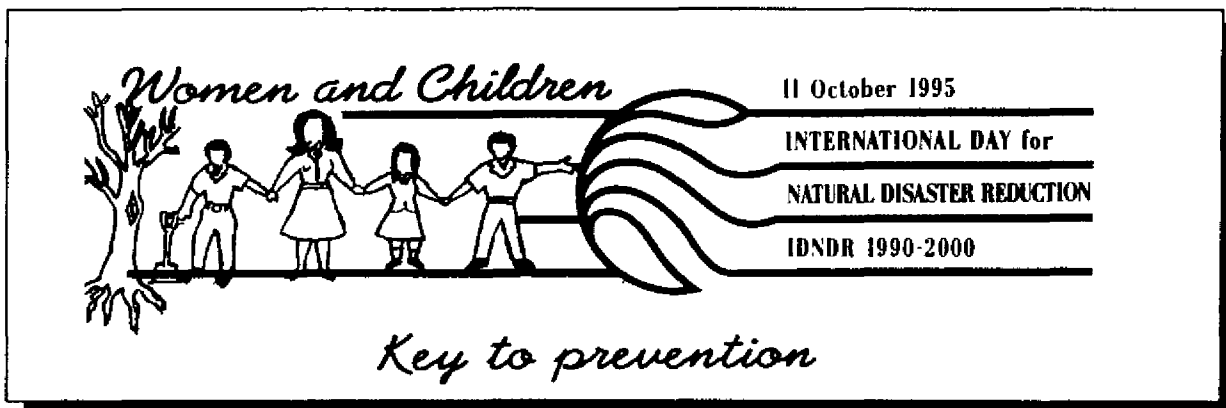
From the international perspective, the IDNDR secretariat addressed the following groups (prioritized in descending order):

- **Traditional partners with outreach networks.** IDNDR National Committees, its Scientific and Technical Committee, NGOs which attended the Yokohama conference, UNDP Resident Coordinators, the UN Department for Public Information, UN agency focal points, key staff of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, national emergency management offices, and other selected international or regional organizations and NGOs were a

primary target of the 1995 campaign. (Total approximately 1500)

These groups are at the forefront of disaster mitigation, and/or sustainable development activities in their geographic areas. Many have attended the Yokohama conference, and conduct local IDNDR campaigns as part of the process in implementing the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action. They contact interested local organizations, media representatives, policymakers and academicians. Activities of these groups reach dozens to thousands of people -- in some cases, even millions (eg, the use of phone cards in Australia, stamps in Ecuador, etc.)

- **Schools, Youth Groups, Women's Groups.** Non-traditional IDNDR partners, generally unapproached in the past, these groups were natural targets in light of the theme. What's more, they are key parts of communities around the world.
- **Print Journalists accredited to the UN in Geneva.** Particular emphasis was placed on wire services from various countries, which can then be picked up by various national newspapers worldwide.



3. Approaches

- Mass mailings (5) were sent to traditional partners. These contained **guidelines, policy summaries, contacts, success stories, an event calendar and references** which could be used to develop national level activities, organize roundtables and draft announcements and articles.
- **Learning About Natural Disasters**, a special Stop Disasters publication, was dedicated entirely to the role of **children** in community disaster mitigation. Launched as a "pilot" and designed to be easily translated and reproduced, its aim was to offer a **practical tool for long-term capacity building**, and to stimulate new exchanges between interested groups. Print runs were therefore expanded to address all target audiences with this publication.
- **Stop Disasters** magazine dedicated a full issue to the theme, focusing particularly on **women's issues**, in order to complement the other special publication for children.
- An annotated bibliography, **Biblio-des: Women and Children, Key to Prevention** was assembled. The regional newsletter **IDNDR Informs** also focused on the theme.
- A call for **Roundtables** on the subject was issued, with background information provided in mass mailings.
- **Press** activities included a UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs press conference in Geneva. An IDNDR Secretariat press release and statement by DHA Under-Secretary General Peter Hansen were distributed to Geneva-based journalists, UNDP Resident Coordinators and National Committees.

4. Messages

- Emphasize pro-active roles of women and children in building a culture of prevention; look for concrete measures to address their vulnerability as special groups.
- Document "prevention pays" success stories, give them to the media and the IDNDR secretariat.
- Focus on community groups with messages and activities.

II. Successes

Successes of the 1995 campaign included: higher participation rates; progress on addressing issues particularly related to education, but also to women; more of a long-term approach, in which the IDNDR campaign is a part of a process, rather than a stand-alone event; stronger media coverage; and better use of materials provided by the IDNDR secretariat.

1. Participation.

The number of **participating organizations** nearly **tripled** from the previous year, and more countries and organizations participated than in any IDNDR campaign to date. **New groups** were sensitized to disaster reduction issues.

The call for **roundtables** was one tool in increasing participation. In 1994, only 18 meetings occurred. In 1995, there were 62. Many of these 62 roundtables attracted women's groups that did not usually meet up with traditional IDNDR partners. A second tool was the **children's booklet and national educational materials** also brought traditional partners more in contact with the educational community. A third tool was the series of **guidelines, announcements and the Information Pack** issued throughout the year, which was done earlier and more comprehensively than before.

2. Education.

IDNDR Day 1995 awakened a real interest in educational issues related to disaster reduction. Many countries are active in this area and are looking to do more. In addition to **Learning About Natural Disasters**, countries used this year's IDNDR Day to reach new groups of students with materials, lectures, radio shows, etc. The Secretariat has received scores of letters requesting more information and contacts between countries on this subject, and to incorporate education into IDNDR Day activities on a permanent basis.

3. Women's issues.

Because the role of women in society can be controversial, this portion of the 1995 campaign raised more questions than it provided answers. Raising questions about the role of women in disaster mitigation was a positive step, coming at a time when women's role in society was reconsidered due to the Beijing conference. Some

women's groups examined disaster reduction issues which might not have otherwise, and emergency management officials questioned how or why the role of women in disaster reduction could be different from men or children. Researchers in universities and UN organizations have informed the Secretariat that the **Stop Disasters IDNDR Day issue** and the **Information Pack**, which summarize many of the issues related to women and disaster mitigation, continue to be used.

4. Shift from event to process.

This tendency had been underway already in several countries, such as Peru, Australia and Chile. The Secretariat incorporated these learnings, designing strategies and tools for that purpose. As part of this process, the Secretariat for the first time really used the tools at its disposal to encourage its partners to "think global, act local".

5. International media coverage.

Exceeded that of all previous years. Reports of national coverage to the secretariat have been higher than at any time in the past.

6. Use of Secretariat materials.

Printed materials distributed by the Secretariat were used in creative ways. Graphics counted. New disaster icons, a revised logo, and art from the children's booklet were successfully adapted in newspapers, magazines and even tv.

III. Lessons Learned from the 1995 Campaign

Issues to address in future campaigns, based on what happened in 1995, are noted below.

1. Theme.

While many less developed countries successfully used the theme, UN agencies mostly found it of little relevance. Ties to the Beijing conference and UN 50th celebrations were actually a disadvantage, as potentially interested groups found their attention drawn elsewhere; journalists were not interested in covering women's issues a month after Beijing ended. Journalists were interested in the rise of natural disasters,

consequences and practical measures. In countries, this often translated into hazard-specific approaches (for example, cyclone preparedness measures). Similarly, organizers not interested in the theme "women and children" pursued what did interest everyone -- children and education. This was often complemented by promotion of hazard-specific activities.

2. Outreach.

Despite considerable improvement over previous years, more groups could be involved. Only 40 of approximately 140 National Committees and Focal Points conducted activities. The IDNDR Scientific and Technical Committee could be more exploited and more active as a group, although several individuals played an active role. A number of academic institutes and NGOs played active roles this year, but they have not always been adequately targeted by the Secretariat or national IDNDR organizers, and hence the overall numbers in those categories remain low.

3. Language.

While IDNDR publications used for the Day (IDNDR Informs, Stop Disasters and Learning About Natural Disasters) were in several languages, circulars and the information pack were not due to financial and time constraints. Many organizations asked for these materials in other languages, particularly French and Spanish, but also Arabic.

4. Geographic concerns.

Participation remained very low in African countries. Potential organizers cited language and financial constraints. Those who did organize events translated the English materials from the Secretariat (ie, Botswana) or raised money locally, the best example being the multi-agency organizing committee in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

5. Posters.

Due to high shipping costs and the difficulty of making posters in enough languages to suit many countries' needs, the Secretariat decided to concentrate its efforts on the children's booklet, and develop a new poster strategy for 1996. Some organizers were disappointed. However, several made posters of their own, far more targeted to national needs.

IV. New Approaches: 1996-2000

1. Address one new target audience each year.

To systematically expand awareness of disaster reduction issues, each annual campaign should focus on sensitizing a **new** target audience by building targeted mailing lists, integrating disaster reduction concerns into conferences, and developing specific materials for their use. In 1995, this was begun successfully in the education field. In 1996, this concept can be applied to city governments, associations, academicians, etc.

2. Themes should build on each other, as part of the process to implement the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action. Themes should revitalize interest in a subject (as in the case of education), launch new initiatives, and provide contacts that can be followed up in subsequent years. All themes should be tied to sustainable development processes.

3. Use sub-themes.

To ensure that the most pressing concerns of disaster mitigation are addressed, **sub-themes** can be applied to IDNDR Day campaign. Based on feedback to the Secretariat, the areas of greatest interest seem to be:

- Children/education (followup 1995)
- Natural hazards -- area-specific
- Marketing and fundraising concerns
- More emphasis on integration into mainstream development/environment activities
- Media/communications
- Information systems, satellite communication, early warnings, remote sensing

In addition, the campaign could be used to address the national "targets" set for the year 2000:

- National risk assessments, and integration in development plans;
- National and local mitigation plans, including community awareness measures;
- Access to warning systems, including broad dissemination.

The 1996 campaign circular will address these points in more detail.

4. Networking and Participation

- The most frequent **national organizers** are in civil protection/ civil defense/ emergency management government offices. Ministries of agriculture or social welfare are occasionally national coordinators. Other national partners are from the health, urban development, environment, meteorology sectors, but overall they are still too few. In other words, all IDNDR partners need to make a concerted effort to **incorporate** the "protection from disasters" angle into work by **various sectors** of society. This is essential to the goal of integrating disaster reduction measures into development activities.
- **National Committees**, as mentioned previously, have the potential to play a greater role. **Twinning and exchanges** will be encouraged to stimulate greater National Committee involvement. A thorough "**audit**" of National Committee contacts, and production of a **contacts booklet** could be a useful step in determining constraints and resources and mobilizing national action. This step is already underway at a national level in the United Kingdom.
- Stronger ties should be sought with national **Red Cross** organizations. Several were interested in the children's booklet, and others are regular IDNDR Day contributors within National Committee frameworks. They will be addressed by the Secretariat in all future mailings, including announcements specifically for Red Cross channels.
- **UN agencies, UNDP Resident Coordinators, the UN Department of Public Information and national UN Information Centres** have low levels of participation. There is nevertheless a budding trend within the UN towards political commitments to natural disaster mitigation. Translating this commitment into public awareness activities such as IDNDR Days will be explored by the Secretariat with these groups.
- **Regional networking** could be a useful way to identify common approaches, make campaigns more area-specific, and strengthen relationships between countries.
- For more accurate mailings and better statistical analysis, national organizers, especially **national committees**, will be requested in the future to provide **contact information for their partner organizations** to be included in international reporting.

5. Maximizing Resources

All trends point to continued resource constraints. Products and events should be designed launched or promoted on IDNDR Day, but reusable in the future. **IDNDR Day activities should contribute to important areas for development set out at the Yokohama conference, such as increased information exchange, regional partnerships, new community initiatives and focused political advocacy.** Time and money are too scarce to see IDNDR Day as a thing apart - it must be a tool in the advocacy process for greater political attention, integration into development activities and public awareness.

In 1995, organizations in Russia, Ethiopia, Australia built **creative partnerships** to maximize resources, address financial constraints, and address a broad public (see country summaries section). In Colombia, Chile and the British Virgin Islands, **local sponsors were found for education materials**; their logos were added to leaflets and books.

Posters which give **practical tips** in visual terms have long-term value; they can be used for IDNDR Day and other purposes. For example, organizations such as the International Institute for Earthquake Engineering in Iran and the National Disaster Management Committee of Cook Islands have developed **posters** which explain earthquake safety measures or early warning procedures more with pictures than with words.

Promotion of booklets about natural hazards is another way to use IDNDR Day for longer-term purposes. Australia and Canada, for example, used the day to promote pamphlets about natural hazards. Other countries may find value in this approach; they may also be interested in exchanging such materials. The Secretariat often receives requests for **hazard-specific materials** by other countries; mechanisms need to be set up before the year 2000 for countries to improve exchanges in this area. IDNDR Days can help catalyze this process by providing **international publicity** for national publications

and by systematizing contacts; this year's IDNDR Day report and a related Stop Disasters article are steps in this direction.

More IDNDR Day organizers could **maximize** their work by stronger **teamwork** between project managers or directors, public information officers and/or government relations officers **within the same institution.** This has been a successful approach systematically used by the World Meteorological Organization; the Australian Emergency Management Organization, in a different application of the same concept,

obtained pro-bono services of a public relations firm. These partnerships help address the problem that many interesting disaster reduction initiatives remain poorly documented and publicized. Publications are sometimes issued, or meet-

ings organized, without clearly identifying target audiences or desired actions they might take. IDNDR Day may be an opportunity to better "market" existing disaster reduction projects, through stronger partnerships between technical managers and professionals within the same organization dealing with external relations, whether it be public information, government relations, outreach to specific parts of the community (NGO relations, employee relations, etc.)

Finally, gathering **"prevention pays" success stories** is critical. Successful prevention, mitigation and preparedness activities are hard to find by definition. Yet people need concise, clear messages that it is worth their time and/or money to pay for that "ounce of prevention" One of the most effective ways to get the attention of political decision makers and journalists is to give them concrete, specific examples. These examples need to come from IDNDR partners -- those facing the threats of disasters, and working to reduce their impact. Over the past year, the Secretariat has increased its

call for success stories; it is editing and documenting those received, so that countries can use the results of this collective effort in raising awareness and funds to help protect people from the impact of natural disasters.

IDNDR Day activities should contribute to key Yokohama conference goals: information exchange, regional partnerships, new community initiatives and focused political advocacy.

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