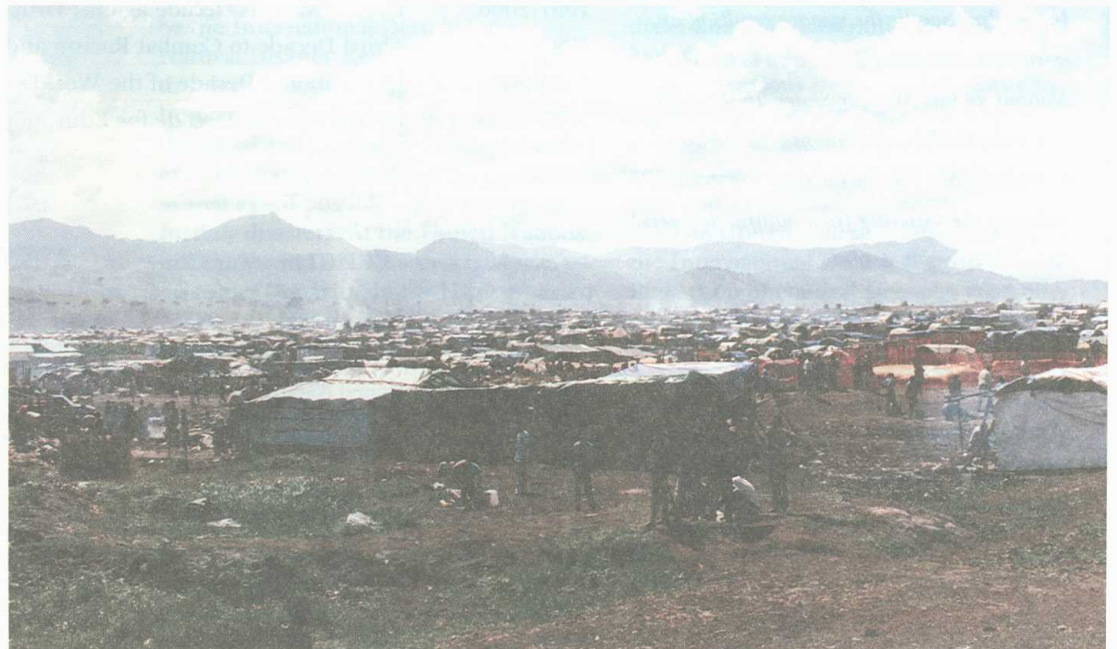


# The German IDNDR Committee for Natural Disaster Reduction

## Objectives Activities Organisation



Refugee Camp in Rwanda  
Photo: Alexander Glass, THW

After the United Nations General Assembly declared the final ten years of the millennium to be the International Decade for Natural Disasters Reduction in December 1989, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs took the decision to establish a German IDNDR Committee for Disaster Mitigation to support German activities during the Decade. The Committee, whose activities are financed from the coffers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and which works closely with the Ministry's Humanitarian Aid section, is registered as non-profit-making association. The members of the Committee come from politics, industry, the scientific community and the fields of development co-operation and disaster relief. All of them are involved in disaster mitigation issues in their daily work. The German IDNDR Committee combines scientific and practical know-

how from its members' various fields of activity. The ensuing intra-disciplinary dialogue between the individual disciplines and fields of activity is crucial. Nevertheless, this intra-disciplinary approach requires further development still in the future. The Committee's activities revolve around natural disasters. In the meantime political and technical disasters have gained in significance – the latter in a domestic context particularly. However, in terms of organisational and logistics preparation, the nature of the actual disaster is not particularly relevant.

### The Committee

#### consists of

Assembly of 37 members

Executive Board

Scientific and Operative Advisory Boards

Secretariat with four employees

#### supports

stronger commitment by government and non-governmental organisations in the field of disaster mitigation;

public information campaigns on global disaster risk and opportunities for disaster mitigation; and

the initiation of scientific and operative disaster mitigation programmes.



The Committee does not plan and finance disaster mitigation projects in the true sense itself but is more a lobbying organisation and acts as an intermediary or 'broker' between German and international disaster management organisations. The Committee and its members have already initiated a multitude of projects including reporting committees, symposia and political activity.

In the first five years of the International Decade the Committee focussed on initiating internationally-oriented research projects and development co-operation projects as well as establishing partnerships with the countries of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Nicaragua.

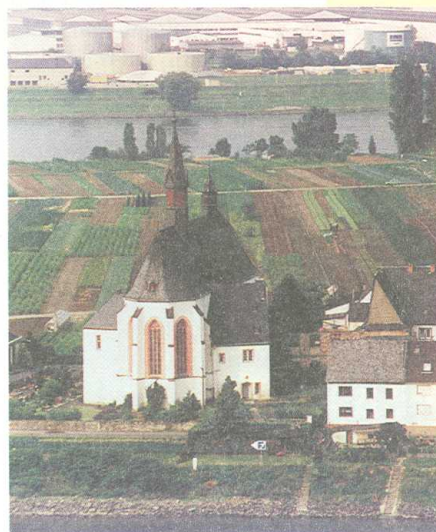
Furthermore, the Committee has striven to anchor disaster mitigation more firmly within development co-operation. The Committee intends to focus more on disaster mitigation in Germany during the second half of the Decade. The changes that have been made to civil protection in Germany and the flooding on the Rhine have resulted in the Committee commissioning a study on the shortfalls in disaster mitigation in industrialised countries using Germany as an example. This study has since resulted in critical dialogue being commenced between the authorities responsible, relief organizations and the leaders of self-help programmes.

After the floods on the Oder in summer 1997 the German IDNDR Committee realised the necessity to examine the causes, progress and consequences of this disaster in both a domestic and an international context. This analysis ought to provide suggestions as to how future floods can be dealt with. Moreover local disaster protection structures have to be strengthened, self-help capacities be supported and the various fields of mitigation have to be inter-connected.

## Review of some of the activities and issues covered by the German IDNDR Committee

Seminars, studies, research projects, lectures and press conferences etc.

1. Causes, Progress and Consequences of the Oder floods in 1997
2. Risks in the Middle Rhine Basin
3. Promoting local disaster protection structures in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan
4. Co-operation between the insurance industry, disaster protection and self-help organisations
5. Absolute poverty and vulnerability to disaster
6. Water: too much – too little ... the main cause of natural disasters
7. Early Warning Systems for the Reduction of Natural Disasters
8. Disaster vulnerability as an indicator for sustainable development
9. Future risks from storm tides
10. Strengthening self-help capacities
11. Cities at Risk
12. Training rescue-dog handlers from Kyrgyzstan
13. Dialogue between the IDNDR, the insurance industry and environmental organisations on climate change
14. Shortcomings in disaster mitigation in industrialised countries using Germany as an example
15. The possibilities of using satellite-based technology in disaster management



Flooding around the Insel Niederwerth near Coblenz-Vallendar  
Photo: Beressen