

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

WORKING GROUP ON THE ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS
OF EARTHQUAKE RISK

Paris, 23-26 August 1977

FINAL REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

Earthquakes cause heavy losses of life and inflict damage which is conservatively estimated at several billion (thousand million) US dollars per year on the average. Despite the scientific and technological achievements of recent years and the hope that they offer of mitigating losses, the latter are still increasing steadily with time due to the growth of population, urbanisation and industrial development, particularly in the developing countries, and to the fact that progress in scientific and technical knowledge is not fully reflected in practice.

The Intergovernmental Conference on the Assessment and Mitigation of Earthquake Risk, held at Unesco Headquarters on 10-19 February 1976, adopted inter alia the following resolutions:

"Resolution 10.02: The Conference recommends:

- (a) that Unesco encourage studies of probability distributions of different kinds of damage caused by earthquakes as a function of geophysical, engineering, economic and social factors. The Conference further recommends the use of the results of such studies in decision-making concerning the mitigation of earthquake hazard to all types of construction, including traditional housing;
- (b) that appropriate international mechanisms be established under Unesco auspices to co-ordinate the aforementioned studies and implement their results through workshops and seminars."

"Resolution 10.1: The Conference recommends that Unesco, in co-operation with other United Nations bodies and relevant international organizations, gather experts from all countries with earthquake insurance programmes, together with interested experts from countries without such insurance programmes and from major insurance and reinsurance companies, seismologists,