very short. UNDRO was not established until 1973, so it was barely 20 years old when it was subsumend into DHA.

As its name indicates UNDRO was intended to be a purely relief coordination organization. It was, however, ahead of the field in its thinking about the need for pre-disaster activities and the relationship between disasters and development – so far ahead that, though it is hard to believe now, the donor community ordered it to cut back its mitigation programmes.

A change is taking place in the style of Technical Assistance reflecting the changed views of recipient countries which I mentioned earlier. Less emphasis on experts and consultants, more Government executed projects.

Military forces are now recognized as a powerful resource for relief, though the operational procedures for employing them are still far from perfect.

Too often decisions about aid are made for "politically correct" reasons with the result that what starts as a good idea is so watered down in order to accommodate sectional interests that the value of the end product is sharply diminished.

Aid money is sometimes cynically churned – we pledge money but you must spend it on our experts or hardware.

Huge, unexpected and seemingly mushrooming involvement in complex emergencies with exceptionally heavy calls on donors for funding. This "relief" expenditure is reflected in sharp reductions in budgets for mitigation.

In June last year the UNDP Administrator reported to the Substantive Session of ECOSOC:

> "At all costs, we must avoid placing ourselves and recipient governments on the horns of the false dilemma of whether we support mitigation or development . . . We in UNDP have noted a trend among traditional donors to move away from the development assistance towards short-term support for emergency relief efforts. If not checked, this could lead to a situation where it is easier, for example, to attract funds for maintenance of uprooted populations in a camp situation than to promote their reintegration into the economic and social life of the affected country."

By November UNDP's cry had become more strident. The new Administrator reported to the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly:

> "Today international support of development is under threat, and risks becoming marginalized . . . While the UN spent less than US$ 4 billion on peace keeping missions during the first 47 years of its existence, it is likely to spend some US$ 3.6 billion in 1993 alone. The growing imbalance between short-term emergency assistance and long-term development aid is deeply troubling."

One fears very much that disaster mitigation programmes will be the first to be sacrificed. They are, by definition, long-term investments which offer few short-term political advantages.

Finally, in the context of international assistance, we have to admit that disaster management consultancy has become a growth industry. I wince with embarrassment when I hear some self-appointed disaster management experts describing their plans to "sensitize" some of the brightest and most experienced people in Asia. The same syndrome is leading to disaster management being promoted as an arcane discipline. That's downright nonsense. We need to sweep away the mystique and recognize that what really matters are basic management skills founded in sound professional skills in a wide range of disciplines, supplemented by a bit of add-on disaster and crisis management know-how (the importance of which should not be underestimated), leadership and local knowledge. Just as development and disasters are inseparable, so too are development management and disaster management.

IMPLICATIONS FOR IDNDR

Has IDNDR kept pace with these changes, or better still been a step ahead of them? How successful has the Decade been so far?

Let's be honest. The Decade got off to a pretty inauspicious start. Whoever heard of setting up a business without a managing director? The director was not appointed until the Decade was six months old. That post should have been filled two years before. Although the Ad Hoc Committee (followed by the STC) and the minuscule staff of the Secretariat laboured hard, the Secretariat was woefully undermanned just at the time when it should have been drawing up strategies and action plans. There was no core funding, the UN having decided that the Decade must exist on extra-budgetary resources. There was also a fair amount of confusion about how the objective and goals were to be achieved which led initially to some misunderstanding between the Secretariat and UNDRO. If ever there was an object lesson in how not to mount a Decade, IDNDR is it. Our sympathy goes out to Olavi Elo in trying to redeem something of this initial fiasco.

First, though, lest I beg the question, by what standard we should judge IDNDR, remembering that its primary focus is, explicitly, disaster-prone developing countries?

Do we judge it in terms of how far it has achieved its stated objective, goals and, more recently, its three very modest specific targets i.e.

- national assessment of risks
- local prevention and preparedness plans
- Global, regional, and national local warning systems?

The trouble with that approach is that it can easily ignore what was going on before, and what is going on anyway outside the framework of the

Decade. It is human nature to delude ourselves that things really only got going when we came on the scene. We must, however, accept that natural disaster reduction did not begin on 1st January 1990. A great deal had been going on long before that, and a great deal is going on now, nationally and internationally, outside the Decade's framework e.g. in the Philippines and Thailand.

I was reminded of that when a participant from China attending a course at the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center apologized profusely because flood data in his country only goes back to 206 B.C. At ADPC I was frequently reminded and enormously impressed with the scope and scale of national initiatives in the disaster management field in Asia and the Pacific. I am sure that the same applies to other regions. IDNDR must be careful not to claim credit where it is not due.

So, perhaps, a more appropriate standard by which to judge the Decade would be to ask "What has ist done to build up national capacities in disaster-prone developing countries that would not have been achieved anyway?"

In my opinion the brutal answer to that question is, on the face of it, not very much yet in tangible terms, though there have been some notable exceptions where the name of the Decade has been invoked to help further objectives e. g. China. If I seem too harsh I have also to admit that IDNDR works in many respects by proxy.

Lots of meetings, lots of talk, lots of reports and paperwork but setting these aside — what is there to show for it all on the ground in disaster-prone developing countries?

Have national committees been a success? Certainly in some cases they are acting as very effective stimulants, but only about 30 are described by the Secretariat as active. What authority do they have in their own countries? Is their role policy, executive, advisory or promotional? Do they have the authority to ask for aid? I suspect not. Is there a danger that in promoting them we are cutting across normal national administrative systems and inflicting yet another committee on already complex bureaucracies? What to do about the inactive ones? Should we prioritize and concentrate on supporting those that are active?

What value are the demonstration projects? $ 40 m of proposals but only funding for $ 10 m. Do they represent the best use of funds? Whose interests are they really serving? Are they truly relevant to the needs of developing countries, as I am sure their sponsors genuinely believe, or are they, in truth, simply serving the interests of their proponents?

Does IDNDR endorsement count for anything? Are the projects crucial to the goals of the Decade? If so, why is not more funding forthcoming? Could the apparent lack of enthusiasm for them beyond their proponents be interpreted as lack of enthusiasm for the Decade as a whole?

Perhaps we should accept that the demonstration projects are peripheral to the goals of the Decade and turn our energies elsewhere.

Does *Stop Disasters* meet the needs and expectations of disaster-prone developing countries? Its articles seem to be biased towards activities in the developed world, I dare say because the editor has difficulty in finding other material. Should it do a bit more market research?

LOOKING AHEAD

What can IDNDR realistically hope to achieve in the remaining years?

We have to recognize its limitations. Money is undoubtedly one though in my opinion if one has a good product to offer sponsors will be forthcoming.

Fred Cole:

> "Humanitarian zeal, unless tempered by humility, feeds more egos than people".

IDNDR is not the hub of worldwide disaster reduction practice; it must cut its coat according to its cloth, recognize that there is not much money available, shun high cost-projects which churn money back to donors or the executing agencies in costly overheads.

IDNDR's role is as a promoter, a catalyst, an honest broker and an information exchange.

We could usefully adopt a slightly modified version of UNDP's criterion:

> ". . . will such arrangements directly support the front-line disaster managers, and provide them with the necessary policy guidance and tools to fulfill the enormous expectations that have been placed upon them by the international community?"

Initial emphasis of IDNDR was on scientific solutions. The reason for that was understandable and I am sure we all appreciate very much the desire of the scientific community to do something. But now, ten years later, is that approach sufficient? I do not in any way want to understate the importance of the contributions of the scientific community to disaster reduction, but the trouble is that scientific solutions often manifest themselves in capital intensive measures which tend to be expensive. And money is scarce.

I have the feeling that we shall better make more progress towards the goals of the Decade by giving more attention to the non-structural policy, social and management aspects of disaster management.

It is therefore encouraging to me to note that the Agenda for this meeting focuses almost entirely on just those issues and capacity building. That's a good start!

I believe the Decade has to recognize that it no longer makes sense to

focus only on natural hazards, to do so is to be out of phase with current thinking about disasters, development, and the environment. Technological disasters must be included.

The scheduling of a presentation by UNEP at the forthcoming World Conference in Yokohama, on "Technological and Natural Hazard Relationship" suggests that the point has been taken. I hope the World Conference will decide formally to include technological disasters in the framework of the Decade.

At first blush it might seem appropiate also to include complex emergencies. However, I suggest that since the emphasis of the Decade is on reduction through scientific and social mechanisms, and the solutions to complex emergencies are entirely political, they would be better left out.

There is a need to get closer to the affected communities which is where the most lives can be saved. This cannot be done from New York or Geneva (something which UNDRO never really came to grips with except for a while in the Caribbean and more recently in the Pacific). Perhaps INDNR should capitalize its success in establishing a Regional Coordinator for Latin America and establish regional coordinators elsewhere.

In moving closer to the affected communities we should remember that there is not necessarily a definitive solution. What is appropriate for the Caribbean may not necessarily be appropriate for Africa or Asia and vice versa. We must respect cultural factors and capitalize on local know-how; these are essential ingredients in the recipe for success.

Olavi Elo's letter to the director of ADPC in June 1993 is on the right track:

- Direct technical assistance to National Committees (to which I would add, provided they have the authority and the demonstrated commitment)
- outreach through UN programmes
- encouragement of national meetings (maybe) and affiliations
- promotion of partnerships with National Committees which are more developed (and active).

These objectives imply a shift of emphasis from international to national and from macro to micro; working from the community level upwards rather than from the top down. Too often UN agencies pay only lip service to this. They protest that they are mindful of the views of their clients but they say "this is the way it's going to be".

The limited number of active National Committees underscores the importance of advocacy/sensitization. Don't waste time preaching to the converted. Is there not a danger that the World Conference will be doing just that? We have to persuade policy makers and budget bureaus to invest in mitigation, so the more arguments we can put together in the economic

language which they speak the better our chances are of persuading them. Studies of the economic impact of disasters are to be encouraged.

Where interest in disaster reduction does exist, disaster management training can be used to promote advanced techniques in development management e. g. a GIS introduced for disaster management is quickly perceived to have developmental applications.

UN is calling for a commitment. How committed is the UN itself? The start up of the Decade was not auspicious. Does the UN provide what the UNDP Administrator describes as the "structural clarity in the roles of the different operational entities of the UN system at all stages of the relief to development continuum"? Or are some UN agencies taking a renewed interest in disaster management and spreading confusion by their independent competitive initiatives, and wanting disaster-prone developing countries to meet their organizational requirements rather than looking at the problem from the countries' perspective. Within the UN itself, is this process undermining the vital coordinating responsibility of the Resident Coordinator?

In a speech to IDNDR High Level Council the UN Secretary General, Mr. Boutros Ghali, said:

> "As for the United Nations in general, we must work to ensure that disaster prevention and vulnerability reduction features in the design of development programmes and investment plans."

It was a pity that the drafters of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in June 1992 ignored this. They rejected the IDNDR STC's well phrased proposal linking natural disaster reduction to planning for sustainable development and, instead, concentrated primarily on relief. A good example of parochialism. I hope the UN family of agencies will take to heart the words of the Secretary General and the UNDP Administrator.

To what extent have the bi-lateral donors got their own act in order? Do they offer "structural clarity in the roles of the different operational entities of their national systems at all stages of the relief to development continuum" or are they, too, guilty of confused structures and inter-departmental rivalry?

CONCLUSION

If I have seemed to exaggerate shortcomings I make no apology. We shall learn more by honest examination of our weaknesses than by deluding ourselves in a self-congratulatory whitewash. My aim has been to be constructively provocative.

I am sure that the Decade Secretariat and the generous Japanese hosts of the World Conference will strive to make it a success. But the potential victims of disasters in developing countries deserve something more than just another grandiose Declaration which leads nowhere. We must replace words with actions.

NATIONAL POLICY COHERENCE AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

by
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I believe that a careful consideration of some basic elements of disaster management can provide guidance to us as we seek to establish those essential features of a coherent national policy able to promote disaster mitigation and prevention outlooks in a broader context of sustainable development. Much of my own experience and outlook has been built by working "on the ground" in the fields of both disaster management and development over the past 20 years, and those practitioners with whom ADPC works on a continuous basis are similarly involved, continuously updating our own views and understanding of these important relationships.

I would like to draw on disaster management examples as a means of demonstrating what has to be done, on a practical level, to first establish, and then to sustain policy engagement. When I speak of policy engagement, I should be explicit in stating that this is not an expectation to be carried out only by government officials, nor solely by those authorities of international organizations and UN agencies, but equally by members of professional associations, scientists, academics, private sector entrepreneurs, the people who compose the "local communities", we hear so much about. It is all of these actors, and more, who must direct their wide range of abilities and diverse skills to make the effort at sustainability successful. It is a complicated process though, and sometimes difficult to see how it all fits together, or "how we can get there from where we are at present".

To simplify matters, I would like to use disaster management as a metaphor, to sketch out a direction and a process, with some specific actions identified, that may serve as specific issues which we can then use to focus our own views. I hope that this process may also stimulate some other specific recommendations from the following discussions that can be used to guide, and provide direction in the preparation for the forthcoming World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in Yokohama in May. This perhaps appears to be roundabout, but it may help us to get beyond the conventions and generalities of a direct approach, much as peripheral vision can sometimes yield acute perceptions. In closing, I will then suggest four quite specific ideas, that may advance our abundant talk on the subject of "engagement" to the possibilities of action. I raise them to be picked up and endorsed by you – or to modify, to reject, or to replace them –, but in the end, to address a specific idea to the formation of the Yokohama conference. It really is time that we start acting, in the course of IDNDR which is now into its fifth year, as much as we wish to encourage others to do so.

What are we doing here and why are we doing this, anyway?

Now, as we get started, we may well ask ourselves why we are doing this. Why are we interested in incorporating disaster mitigation and prevention policy commitments into sustainable development? In ADPC's training programmes or technical assistance consulting that we do in Asia, I frequently use a population distribution map to focus our immediate attention at the outset. It is actually more of a population concentration map, at least in Asia, because every dot represents 500,000 people. Viewed this way, in terms of densities, even Europe appears rather insignificant. The representation of exposure to serious disaster risk in Asia becomes still more graphic when one considers the variety, frequency, and severity of natural hazards which occur in the Asian region. The vulnerability is likely to become more severe still, as the large, and rapidly growing population centers spawn their own hazards in the forms of urban excesses, technological hazards and the adverse environmental consequences. Natural disasters are only part of the story, and in the future they may well pale by comparison to the risks posed by man himself. There is cause for some optimism though as man-made, or man-induced hazards can be prevented – if one starts early, and seriously enough, to do so.

Ironically, we may well ask where we spend all of our money, relative to our exposure of risk? Compare these population concentrations of the Asian region to Europe – or the three or four dots evident in the corner of Somalia, where the United Nations is presently spending something like 1 billion dollars. And "we" say we don't have money to spend on mitigation? 110 million people live on the island of Java – adjacent to a major fault and sharing the island with 21 active volcanoes! When we discuss, and promote, risk assessment, the entire rationale is to guide us in our judgments of where the most effective interventions may be made. We can ask if "international promoters" bring the same clear reasoning to some of their own "priority applications of resources", that they encourage individual governments to apply?

Is the IDNDR like a slow-onset disaster?

In returning to our metaphor of disaster management, we should have a hazard which we can contemplate, as every disaster manager knows that there is nothing like a good emergency to concentrate people's attentions. Unfortunately, such seriousness of intent generally happens after a disaster, but maybe we can try to induce it before an event, now. That after all, is when disaster management really has to be done – and that is no different than the entire rationale behind disaster mitigation and prevention. It is also the basis of the IDNDR.

To focus our attention on the issues, let us consider if the IDNDR is like a slow-onset disaster? While not suggesting that IDNDR is a slow-onset disaster, it may share some of the characteristics of one. This comparison may

assist us in visualizing how we perceive the phenomenon and more importantly, what is necessary to be done to move beyond contemplation to active engagement. Consider the following characterizations of a slow-onset disaster, such as a drought, or perhaps equally serious, the progressive environmental degradation of a natural resource on which several million people depend for their existence:

- there is a slow, or sporadic growth in developing its full effects, although the cumulative detrimental or destructive effects can result in a progressive acceleration of severity
- it can be difficult to describe accurately, to locate precisely, or to quantify
- information is sketchy or fragmented, and frequently contradictory
- there is uncertainty as to who the primary affected people are, by whose relative judgments, and where they are located
- it is difficult to know the extent by which people are affected (beyond immediate symptoms) in the early stages if there is uncertainty as to their prevailing conditions and "baseline concerns" beforehand
- the dimensions of the problem may not be clear, nor are they necessarily understood clearly by observers
- there is hesitation as to whether to intervene "yet", and possible uncertainty of how to proceed until "the appropriate time"
- there is an abundance of opinion and ideas, some of which may be more informed than others
- there is an ignorance (or distrust?), of local abilities to cope
- there can be a lack of means or understanding by which effective pressure or intervention may be applied
- who (individuals/organizations) are to make the critical decisions, or as a variation, which of the many, who believe it is their prerogative to do so?
- who has what authority?
- without direction, or authority, there may be multiple, incremental initiatives
- are there sufficient resources (human, technical, material, financial)
- what can, or should be done – and should it be now, or later?
- meanwhile, we hope (pray, wish) it gets better.

Somehow, in a slow-onset disaster with its failure to dominate information, the uncertainty, the lack of clarity, and the multiple perceptions all crowding in, one on another, can easily contribute to imposing an inertia. Basic disaster management concepts get lost or are forgotten:

> Decisions have to be made,
> Functions assigned,
> Resources (human, technical, material, financial) applied,
> and ACTED UPON – if a disaster is to be averted.

How can it be done?

It is fairly easy to identify, theoretically, WHAT *should* be done, and sometimes this is even able to be done by people with little real knowledge of the place, the problem, or the people. Some particular elements of the media can even specialize in the field. It is much more difficult, but absolutely critical, to address the matter of HOW the interventions *can* be done.

As an example, during the first day of discussion in this Round Table, the following important issues were identified as being necessary to promote the effective integration of disaster mitigation and prevention policies into sustainable development practice:

- a clear vision of the related conceptual elements of disaster risk reduction and developmental achievements
- the importance of disaster risk reduction policy awareness amongst decision-makers
- the necessity of incorporating risk reduction measures into development programme activities as well as inculcating developmental thinking into disaster management perceptions
- the critical roles which information utilization and the application of data play
- the need for informed and appropriate applied research to be carried out, with particular emphasis on subsequent technical exchange among "affected" countries
- the importance of multi-sectoral and inter-organizational relationships at all levels of engagement
- the critical need for resource identification and commitment, both within and beyond the immediate point of need
- a need for specific proposals able to engage authorities, communities, and "principals" who by their position or skills are involved in furthering the objectives of disaster risk reduction.

It is evident that these are the things that have to be done, but behind these policy issues there remains the inescapable fact that there must be a designated and engaged authority if accomplishments are to realized. Some (one) has to identify, determine and direct the initiative. Someone has to determine, and then be able to say, "Disaster mitigation and prevention is important for this country (province, organization, NGO, agency, etc.) and it must be incorporated as an integral part of the on-going development practices. We are prepared to commit the time, energy, and resources to make it viable and effective in the recognition that it is in our own interests to do so. It represents a value that we are prepared to embrace."

Despite the recognized value of self-reliance and the importance of community-based initiatives in both disaster management and development activities, there still must be some(one), some authority, charged or elevated to decide, direct, and develop capabilities. Unless that authority is

clearly identified as such, and most importantly recognized by other collaborators as being so, it is unlikely that any effective or coherent policies will be implemented.

A country (entity, organization) cannot proceed with the basic aspects of disaster management implementation unless and until an authority proceeds to establish:

- who can, and is able to, make decisions
- decide and plan what has to be done
- determine and "assign" who (what agency, etc.) is able to do what
- what resources (human, technical, material, financial) are required
- what information is required
- in what order, priority, or relative emphasis to proceed.

Critical elements of disaster management – sustaining the process

The critical institutional elements which enable disaster management policies to be realized are a consciously structured organization, appropriate technical skills and abilities, human and material resources, and the developed capacity to carry out assigned functions. More often than not, a country (entity, organization) claims a lack or an inability in one or more of these institutional elements as justification for not being able to achieve a coherent and effective disaster management programme. In many of these cases, I believe that the complaint is misplaced as there seems to be a barrier to our perception of what the real building blocks of disaster management are, and which must be addressed before any headway can be made in establishing an organization, providing technical skills, obtaining resources, or building capacities. These I would like to designate as the "critical aspects" of disaster management.

First, there must be the awareness of a perceived importance of disaster management to the country (community, organization, etc.) on its own terms for commitments to be made. Secondly, it should be realized that these commitments will have to be political, social, and economic ones. If these fundamental commitments are lacking, other people's time and resources are quite literally being wasted and they ought to be transferred to the attentions of a more aware and interested party. Thirdly, this fostering of commitment depends heavily on the developed knowledge of decision-makers about the rationale and relevance of risk reduction, as well as on a continuing flow of information to the public or community at large. Unless the community of people most directly affected by disaster risks perceives the value of anticipation and mitigation practice, and collectively promotes the ideas concerned, official authorities can easily remain complacent and uninvolved.

Underlying the purposeful application of information and abilities is a fourth element which is easily overlooked. There has to be a basic con-

fidence that something can be done to reduce one's own exposure to risk and a fundamental trust in the community's willingness to address its own well-being. While this frequently is presented as "self-reliance", it is really an even more basic acceptance that an individual, or a community must be responsible for providing a measure of self-protection, and that they do possess the facility for doing so. Finally, the successful realization of disaster management rests on concepts, which taken together constitute an outlook of anticipation, and the application of abilities and resources to protect something of a perceived common value. Too often a singular gesture is exhibited, only to fail in the absence of an appreciation that it is only part of what must be a more comprehensive disaster reduction context. The occasional posters which may be displayed, or the preparation of a "disaster plan" without the active participation and understanding of those people expected to carry it out, are examples of such a limited outlook.

To proceed from the critical aspects of disaster management which create the conceptual framework for institutional engagement, I would now like to highlight specific key themes that may be developed to create a coherent and sustainable disaster management process. It is important to notice that the themes mutually contribute to one another, and it is that synergy which provides the conditions for sustainability.

1. **Awakening interest.** There must be a stimulus to motivate potentially affected people and authorities of both hazards and risks which threaten their own well-being. We have seen repeatedly that the occurrence of a severe disaster is a powerful stimulant to a community to become committed to a serious programme of risk reduction. It is to be hoped that there may be other leaders of foresight able to capitalize on the evidence of other people's disasters as a goad to protecting their own communities. The message must be "brought home" powerfully and graphically to stimulate a serious and sustained interest in risk reduction.
2. **Policy engagement.** While much effort undoubtedly must depend on popular involvement, there is an essential need for emphasis and direction. In any country (province, organization, etc.), someone must say, "In our situation, the matter of risk reduction is important, it is worth doing, and there are things which we can do about it". This conviction must then also be able to be demonstrated in a series of actions by the inclusion of a wide range of participants, drawn from those very people most immediately affected.
3. **Multi-sectoral relationships.** By definition, disasters exceed the immediately available facilities and resources to cope, so by extension it suggests that other abilities are required. Disaster management is not the responsibility of a special administrator known as a "disaster manager", but a series of informed relationships established among a wide range of professional disciplines and the agencies which apply them. Almost any skills or professions – engineers, hydrologists, teachers, community

leaders, industrialists, truck drivers, doctors, politicians, civil servants, etc. etc. have a vital role to play in directing their services to anticipated hazards faced by their community. This is where the outlook referred to above comes in, as without it, it is too easy to expect disaster management to be "someone else's" responsibility. The strength of a disaster management programme lies simply in the extent to which people of different skills can anticipate their common needs in the face of a hazardous threat and are able to work together effectively under acknowledged direction. For this to happen, functional relationships must be built over time and in advance of the emergency.

4. **Institutional identity.** Disaster management requires that the most important work be done in advance, precisely at the time when there is no immediately perceived threat. In order to sustain attention, focus, and purpose, a disaster management programme requires an identity best established by a visible, full-time institution and its demonstrated services. The programme can be buttressed by symbols, characters, or activities, but to be effective when needed, the existence of the institutional capability must be demonstrable well in advance. The need is not served by simply having a "designated authority" to spring into action (when needed), or administrative "Standing Orders" on some civil servant's bookshelves, which are soon forgotten.

5. **Economics and development.** It is only recently that we are beginning to count the costs of disasters — as they escalate rapidly, and more importantly to relate them to the other costs of development. As hundreds of millions of dollars are immediately thrown at urgent, and perhaps gratuitous, relief measures, can an administrator seriously argue that mitigation practices are unaffordable? As the losses attributed to disasters can approach an equivalent amount of the annual increase of gross national product of a country, can economic planners ignore relative cost-benefit considerations of investment decisions? These questions must shape an outlook that goes beyond the humanitarian provision of blankets and temporary accommodation of victims. As countries in disaster-prone environments develop, and their economies expand, one must concentrate on the fact that their rapidly growing assets are also becoming greater liabilities for disaster risks.

6. **Public awareness.** Effective and comprehensive disaster management competence cannot be sustained without public interest and participation, and that cannot be established without public education and awareness. While advocacy may be necessary to motivate the public and authorities, more simple, but frequent, education is necessary to inform people about the hazards to which they are exposed. It is equally important to educate people that there are things that they can do to reduce their own riks and their social responsibilities to do so. Education is critical to a sustained awareness, and will be only as effective as it is broad in

its dissemination. This provides an example underlining the importance of the engagement of multi-sectoral relationships and the need for an institutional identity which can both be harnessed to the task of public awareness.

7. **Mitigation.** There is a need to establish an appreciation of mitigation and risk reduction, but more importantly to demonstrate that it is possible and that it does save lives, property, and resources. It also has to be simplified as a concept, and expanded in practice through education and professional application. Whether it is adopted is a political issue, but how it is implemented is a practical issue. Education and public awareness is necessary to address the political decisions, but many individuals in their daily work can contribute to the implementation of measures to reduce the effects of known hazards.
8. **Training.** A continuous, multi-sectoral commitment to training is the key to sustaining awareness and developing abilities reflected in each of the preceding themes. The process should be self-sustaining as those trained become the trainers, and as the process is continuously enriched by new professional experiences and disaster events. The identification of training, and its promotion, does not happen automatically, as it too must be deemed as critical and directed. The value of training is determined only by the extent to which it successfully takes place prior to the time of immediate need.

Suggested Actions for the DSE Round Table
Recommendations for Issues to be Considered at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in Yokohama, May 1994

Proceeding from the previous discussion of what should be done, and the reflections of how we can implement practices that will contribute to risk reduction, I would like to pose some issues for consideration by the participants of the Round Table. Each of the four issues is only a suggestion of a recommendation which could be made to the Yokohama Conference by the participants of this Round Table to further the objectives of the IDNDR during the remainder of the Decade. I have chosen these issues because each one requires that something be done in tangible terms by authorities or others ostensibly involved in realizing the goals of the Decade. The issues suggested may be accepted here, rejected, or modified as considered appropriate, but they are posed with the anticipation that the participants assembled here will also become engaged and do something about them. These issues may also provoke similar concrete suggestions from other participants able to direct attention at Yokohama in furthering IDNDR objectives.

I. Can the authorities of a disaster affected country be "required" (or encouraged) to publicly identify through their United Nations Permanent Representative to the General Assembly (which created the IDNDR), for informational purposes:
    1. Who/What authority is today responsible for the next anticipated disaster in their country.
    2. What/Where the perceived priority hazard threat is in their country, citing primary concerns of potential losses and damages.
    3. What the country's intentions, and needs are, to address these perceived risks between the present time and the next disaster. Which agencies in the country are entrusted with the responsibility of doing so.
    4. What needs there are for accomplishment.

This mechanism of public information would provide the benefit of exposure for those countries wishing to demonstrate their commitment to the realization of the objectives of the Decade, and provide a "marketing opportunity" for them to elicit broader international support for their initiatives. The statement could also provide international exposure to a good or effective idea which a country has pursued which may hold promise to another country in risk reduction practice. A broader policy awareness would also be served internationally as well as within the individual country as an explicit announcement would require preliminary relationships and document preparation among different government ministries or agencies. It would also address the difficult question of authority and "who's in charge", as perceived in the country's own terms.

II. Should IDNDR be expanded to take account of "the hand of humankind" in exacerbating the occurrence of disasters?

1. Should technological hazards be included in the concern of IDNDR, with the implication being that by so doing environmental issues are necessarily included?
2. Should the IDNDR become the IDDR – International Decade for Disaster Reduction?
3. By designating an IDDR, or a broadened definition of hazards, will that enable a country to face the issue of what it, itself, considers to be a potential disaster hazard and a priority concern of its own attention?

III. Can "Basic Minimum Standards" of institutional capacity be identified and encouraged as a measure of engagement (or need) as a country seeks to marshal support for proceeding to develop its disaster management and risk reduction capabilities? Possible illustrative examples include:

1. National disaster act, legislation, etc.
2. Specified authority(-ies) for different aspects of disaster requirements
3. Country planning or financial allocation process to incorporate disaster reduction considerations
4. National operational plan(s)
5. Annual budgetary allocations, special funds, other financial instruments
6. Statement of programme priority commitments, primary hazard reductions
7. Established national development process of risk rating projects or investments (such as already existing environmental impact assessment).

The content of the instruments or institutional frameworks would be unique to the needs and conditions of a country, but the desirability of the instrument or facility itself would be the subject of the Minimum Basic Standards, i. e. of that which is conducive to having a comprehensive, coherent and effective disaster management and risk reduction "system".

IV. Is the intended purpose of the Decade clear to affected countries?

1. Are international procedural mechanisms established and understood sufficiently to enable effective international collaboration in realizing Decade objectives?
2. Are disaster-related terms such as vulnerability, risk reduction, mitigation, etc. sufficiently explicit and commonly understood to be effective in creating policy awareness and promoting public awareness regarding the objectives of the Decade?

3. Are the relative roles and programme interests of different elements of the United Nations engaged with IDNDR issues sufficiently determined and understood to be effective collaborators? (with particular reference to UNDP, UN-Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Secretary General, General Assembly, ECOSOC, etc.)