

DRAFT OF: 2 October 1993

PART II THE IDNDR SECRETARIAT'S STRATEGY AND ITS RATIONALE.

SECTION I. THE IDNDR SECRETARIAT'S STRATEGY.

The IDNDR Secretariat's Strategy covers what the Secretariat considers it must do to play its part effectively and efficiently. The IDNDR Secretariat's Strategy is not a strategy for the Decade itself, though if such a strategy were developed, the two would have much in common.¹⁰

The departure point for the Strategy is the statement given in GA Resolution 44/236 of the Decade's Objective and Goals (See Annex .) The Strategy is further shaped by other provisions of this and other GA Resolutions, by formal statements of the Special High Level Council, and by the targets, programme framework, guidelines established by the Scientific and Technical Committee. Guidance is also taken from the work of other formal IDNDR groups such as Ad hoc Committee of Experts, the UN Steering Committee for the IDNDR, the UN Inter-Agency Working Group for the IDNDR, and from IDNDR National Committees and focal points. Routine interaction with organizations and individuals carrying out IDNDR-related activities complements and broadens this guidance. The rationale for the Strategy is largely derived from the assessment (The IDNDR Today - The IDNDR Secretariat's Perspective) given in Part I

Fundamental to the Secretariat's Strategy is, of course, the function and character of the Secretariat itself. This is summarized as follows.

The IDNDR is not a United Nations Decade, but an International Decade under the auspices of the United Nations. The IDNDR Secretariat is organizationally within the United Nations. Its constituency is both within and - for the most part - outside the United Nations. The IDNDR Secretariat is the international focal point for the day-to-day conduct of the Decade. Within the United Nations, the IDNDR Secretariat has the lead responsibility for monitoring, reporting and advising on the Decade's progress, and its prospects. The IDNDR Secretariat does not - indeed cannot - manage the Decade. It seeks to inform, facilitate, guide, and initiate. The Secretariat is service oriented and in this spirit, seeks to be responsive, proactive and authoritative.

The IDNDR Secretariat's Strategy is broken down into four Areas

- Area 1: Disaster Reduction Capacities, Technologies and Concepts.**
- Area 2: Concerted International Action for Disaster Reduction**
- Area 3: Disaster Reduction Awareness and Information.**
- Area 4: IDNDR Secretariat Performance and Capacity.**

For each Area there is a Strategic Objective. Indicators of Secretariat Achievement and a Description.

The philosophical basis for all four areas, is that the Secretariat itself seeks a small, precise and catalytic role for itself, and for others participation in the Decade in a manner that best serves to promote disaster reduction in terms of respective existing disaster reduction programmes and activities and interests.

¹⁰As discussed in Part III, a Strategy for the Decade has not been defined. In the Secretariat's opinion it is needed, and part of the Secretariat's own Strategy is to press for and help develop an IDNDR Strategy, or some global plan to guide the interested parties and actors concerned in meeting the Decade's goals and Objectives.

AREA 1: DISASTER REDUCTION CAPACITIES, TECHNOLOGIES AND CONCEPTS..

Strategic Objective.

To encourage and facilitate effective disaster-reduction programmes, projects, events and the development of new techniques and technologies, especially for and/or in disaster-prone developing countries, such that by the end of the Decade in these countries there is evidence or promise of raised disaster-reduction capacity

Indicators of Secretariat Achievement

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- By 1996, ready availability at country, regional and international levels of up-to-date profiles of disaster-prone countries, summarizing the main hazards, the risk of disaster, disaster reduction capacities, ongoing and planned disaster reduction measures.
- As of 1995, a minimum of three disasters in developing countries reviewed ex post facto for disaster reduction lessons learned, and disaster reduction development programmes developed in consequence.
- Amount of funds/resources for disaster reduction mobilized by IDNDR Secretariat

Description.

National Disaster Reduction Capacities.

The Secretariat will focus its efforts on developing countries. These efforts will bear on 1) ensuring that there exist and are maintained summary but informative profiles of each developing country's disaster reduction capacity, and ongoing, planned and needed disaster reduction measures; 2) ensuring the formulation of disaster reduction development strategies, programmes, projects and activities in function of assessments - based on possible scenarios or disasters that have occurred 3) Promoting and advising on the integration of disaster reduction in development planning and development assistance.

The Secretariat's work will be characterized by a geographic approach, and by use of and interaction with existing international structures and mechanisms. Within the newly integrated IDNDR Secretariat/Disaster Mitigation Branch, a geographical structure will be set up so that the staff concerned can be familiar with and effectively address regional and country disaster reduction concerns, and interact with the geographical entities of IDNDR partners. Regional IDNDR Representation will be established, along the present model for Latin America and the Caribbean, with established regional organizations already active in disaster reduction. (See Area 4 - IDNDR Secretariat Performance and Capacity).

With Respect to the Development of Disaster Reduction Concepts, Procedures and Technologies

Determining Disaster Reduction Base Lines.

"Country Disaster Reduction Profiles"

Undertaking improvements in disaster reduction at any level - local, national, regional or international must take into what the existing level of disaster reduction is, and what improvements are already being

made or planned. A summary understanding of one or a group of countries' "disaster reduction profile" is needed as a start to understanding what more needs to be done. There is plenty of information available for any given country on hazards, risks, vulnerabilities, past disasters, disaster reduction measures and resources existing, planned or desired, on policy, legislation, organization. But there is no single reference document which in standard format (See Annex —) can provide an up to date summary of what the "disaster situation" is which the IDNDR can improve.

The methodology for developing these profiles will be: 1) for the Secretariat with the DM Branch to develop a Draft Country Disaster Reduction Profile completed for selected countries on the basis of "in house" disaster reduction information, and "disaster reduction extrapolations" from standard reports (UN Resident Co-ordinators' Development Report, aid Agency programme/project summaries etc., and the completed questionnaires from IDNDR National Committees submitted in connection with the World Conference. 2) Agreement with the organizations concerned on the completion and maintenance of the Profiles by the UN Disaster Management Teams with respective Governments and IDNDR National Committees.

Identification of Disaster Reduction Needs.

The Disaster Reduction Lessons Learned Initiative

A positive factor of disasters is that the raised social and political sensitivities to disaster-related issues open a window of opportunity for bringing attention and funds to needs which might otherwise go unattended. Another positive factor is the existence of a "real-life scenario" by which to see what disaster reduction measures worked, which did not, and what was lacking. At present there is no international stand-by mechanism to take advantage of these factors.

It is the Secretariat's intention to constitute small international teams¹¹ which following a disaster, can work with national authorities in conducting ex post facto "lessons learned" reviews of prevention, mitigation or preparedness issues which contributed to or reduced the negative effect of the hazard. These "lessons learned" will be a basis for developing remedial measures and training programmes.

Integration of Disaster Reduction within Development Policy and Planning.

This is a broad issue which the Secretariat, playing an active advocacy role, will address on several fronts, as follows:

Determination and Inventory of Policies and Procedures.

- At the international level, interact with the main international development actors (the UN Agencies - in particular UNDP, intergovernmental organizations, regional bodies, the World Bank and the Developmental Banks, on policy with respect to integration of disaster reduction concerns within technical and capital assistance programmes, and with respect to advising counterpart governments on this. Existing or envisaged policies will be inventoried by the Secretariat for general reference.

- At the regional and country levels (backstopped by the geographically structured IDNDR/DM Branch), the key dates, main characteristics, and the disaster reduction policies of respective national development plans of disaster prone countries, along with the policies of international developmental aid bodies will be determined - for inclusion in National Disaster Reduction Profiles.

¹¹ In the area of international disaster relief the UN Disaster Assessment and Co-ordination (UNDAC) stand-by teams, suggest one model for such an initiative. Pre-established teams composed of various specialists made available to the UN could be fielded at relatively short notice.

Advocacy and Training.

- As events suggest, or opportunities arise - at the regional and country levels, interaction with the UNDMT, UN Resident Co-ordinator, UN Agency Representatives, and heads of donor missions, and in particular with national planning and financial authorities to include disaster reduction in forthcoming developmental plans
- A roving DMTP workshop for "donor" organizations on the integration of disaster reduction within developmental assistance programmes.

Resource Mobilization and Fund-Raising for Disaster Reduction.

The 1% for Disaster Reduction Initiative.

One of the main conceptual tenets of the Decade - indeed of disaster reduction - is that investments in disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness will reduce, possibly prevent losses, in case of disaster and will reduce the cost of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Indeed, the importance of such disaster reduction measures is stated repeatedly - yet international funds are consistently more forthcoming for relief than for disaster reduction. Periods after disasters are critical and opportune for disaster reduction. They are critical because after one disaster, return to the status quo ante will lead eventually to another disaster, if post-disaster assistance does not reduce vulnerability which led to the disaster, there will be disaster again. They are opportune, because of heightened public and political sensitivity to disasters. The difficulty is to make sure that in the rush to relief, there is also gain for prevention, mitigation and preparedness.

The IDNDR Secretariat will undertake an initiative both to highlight the importance of disaster reduction in the rehabilitation and reconstruction phases, and to help redress the balance between assistance for relief and assistance for disaster reduction. Under the 1% for Disaster Reduction Initiative, A Statement of Intent is signed between the IDNDR Secretariat and individual international donors (Governments, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations), that for the period of the Decade, in cases of natural disasters, the donor will add to its total emergency assistance a 1% contribution to a disaster reduction programme to benefit the affected country. The donor will make the contribution bilaterally or through a multilateral channel as he sees fit. The IDNDR Secretariat will maintain and publicize summaries of projects and funding mechanisms. A roster of participants in the programme will be maintained and published in appropriate documentation (STOP Disasters, GA/ECOSOC Reports, IDNDR publications etc.) along with any project/or programmes funded in that manner.

Match-Making for Disaster Reduction in Developing Countries.

Formulating good disaster reduction programmes, projects and activities is half the solution. The other half is having the necessary funds and resources. The Secretariat can help raise these by "match-making" between disaster reduction initiatives and sources of funds and resources, and also if the situation warrants, between these and possible implementing partners. The main steps for this will be

- 1) Identification of disaster reduction initiatives: these will be accepted for match-making from different sources, as long as they have cleared the national process by which proposals are approved for international funding. The Secretariat will not seek international funds or resources until this has been certified by the UN Resident Co-ordinator.
- 2) Listing (and summary description) in a Secretariat Fundable Disaster Reduction Initiatives Roster: periodical circulation of the roster, and maintenance on UNIENET

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3) **Annual Reviews of the Roster:** once at the country level in a meeting between national and international parties concerned, and once at the international level between the IAWG, the Secretariat, donor and recipient country representatives.

4) **Ongoing interaction** between the Secretariat, the DM Branch, Regional/country desks of international organizations (UN, NGO's) and of Donor Governments/Intergovernmental Organizations.

AREA 2: CONCERTED INTERNATIONAL ACTION FOR DISASTER REDUCTION.

Strategic Objective

To encourage and facilitate a coordinated, concentrated and productive effort from designated IDNDR entities and from each major international actor in all relevant fields in order to promote, support with funds, and expertise and other resources, or participate in disaster-reduction worldwide

Indicators of IDNDR Secretariat Achievement.

- By end 1994, agreement in principle between main international IDNDR "actors" on roles in and actions by which to meet IDNDR goals and objectives.
 - Regular interaction on substantive IDNDR matters between IDNDR Secretariat and individual members of the STC and the SHLC.
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Description.

Designated IDNDR Entities.

The Special High Level Council (SHLC).

With respect to the Special High Level Council (SHLC), the Secretariat will recommend that the USG/DHA propose to the UN Secretary General that the SHLC's mandate be broadened to cover disaster response in addition to disaster reduction. The purpose for this will be to underscore symbolically the "disaster continuum" from prevention to relief to reconstruction, and through the greater level of publicity given to disaster relief, give SHLC members greater opportunity and visibility for advocating disaster reduction measures.

In the case of the SHLC this will be oriented towards facilitating implementation of the SHLC's commitment (12 Point Plan of Action, 25 January 1993), to:

- promote public awareness and mobilize the necessary support from the public and private sectors through participation in a Plan of Action towards the 1994 World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction.
- visit Government leaders in own and other vulnerable countries to promote the adoption of national disaster mitigation policies to be integrated in the social and economic development process, including educational system at all levels
- mobilize the participation of leading personalities from the private and public sectors in support of National Committees, especially in those countries where disaster mitigation activities are only at the initial stage;
- address national, regional and technical meetings focusing on issues related to disaster mitigation in order to enlist the participation of all public and private sectors of society which have the potential to contribute to disaster reduction activities;
- stimulate and conduct resource mobilization and fund-raising campaigns, including participation in observance programme for the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction.

The Scientific and Technical Committee

With respect to the Scientific and Technical Committee (STC), the Secretariat help ensure that while respecting geographical distribution, through the process of rotation a balanced membership be established between the five sectors of: 1) Government, 2) Non-Governmental, Voluntary organizations 3) Education/Academia/Research 4) Business, Commerce, Industry, 5) The Print and Audio-Visual media. And that, expertise in most disaster-related disciplines and activities be covered within these sectors. Furthermore also through the process of rotation, the percentage of women in the Committee will be increased significantly.

The UN Steering Committee

With respect to the UN Steering Committee, the Secretariat intends to:

- propose to the USG/DHA that a recommendation be made to the Secretary-General to disband the UN Steering Committee for the IDNDR, transferring its responsibilities to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), at the same time complementing the IASC with members involved in the IDNDR (It should be noted that IASC has concentrated on complex emergencies only, and its membership does not represent the disaster mitigation/IDNDR and does not include all agencies involved in IDNDR.)
- recommend to the USG/DHA, Chairman of the IASC, that at its regular meetings the IASC's formal agenda include appropriate inter-agency issues related to the IDNDR, and to disaster-reduction in general as a major component of the prevention-to-relief-to development continuum.
- insure that it (the Secretariat) is able to help prepare and support IDNDR related items of such IASC meetings, and follow-up on decisions up as needed

Once working level agreements are reached on the above, recommend to the USG/DHA, as Chairman of the IASC, that letters be sent from the UN SG to Agency Heads on the question of the UN organization's "adoption" of the IDNDR, and that the working level arrangements be reviewed and if acceptable, endorsed at an IASC meeting.

Inter-Agency Working Group

With respect to the Inter-Agency Working Group, the Secretariat intends to.

- continue the present process of involving non-UN entities concerned with and competent in IDNDR activities (and possibly change the Working-Groups title to reflect the enlarged membership).
- pursue a focused work programme with the Group, and/or focus on specific issues (such as the World Conference) requiring technical, multi-organizational/sectoral involvement, and in particular develop the Agenda for Concerted International Action in Disaster Reduction.
- institutionalize regular meetings of the Working Group, possibly under rotating Chairmanship
- ensure that it (the Secretariat) is able to maintain ongoing and productive interaction with the Working Group

Increase interaction between IDNDR Secretariat staff responsible for public information, and corresponding staff in respective UN organizations to develop IDNDR related information/media and awareness raising programmes - notably at country levels following disasters, or before periods of seasonal hazards.

The Secretariat will sustain interaction and support to both the SHLC and the STC beyond that provided for respective periodical meeting. The Secretariat will actively seek opportunities by which to put the expertise and prominence of the members in the two committees to promotional or practical use, maintaining contact with individual STC members to identify opportunities for individual activities in support of the Decade.

National IDNDR Committees

Agenda and Understandings for Concerted International Action in Disaster Reduction.

There is need for understanding between major international actors in disaster reduction as to who undertakes what in the "concerted international action." Many of these actors have long had areas of particular interest and expertise, and have been conducting effective programmes. With its IDNDR Partners, notably in the Inter-Agency Working Group, the Secretariat will develop an implementation "Agenda" showing areas in which concerted international is necessary, and, a set of understandings with organizations interested in playing lead roles in these areas.

AREA 3: DISASTER REDUCTION AWARENESS AND INFORMATION.

Strategic Objective

To help ensure that during the Decade, its existence and purpose is widely known, and that by the Decade's end, adequate means and mechanisms exist by which to raise significantly awareness and knowledge about disaster-reduction of planners, policy and decision makers in all relevant fields, and of populations at risk.

Indicators of IDNDR Secretariat Achievement.

- By 1994, routine references to the Decade in the international television and written media in connection with coverage of disasters.
 - By early 1994, basic information on the IDNDR kept up to date and available worldwide on UNINET.
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Description.

Area 3 covers activities which lie across the disaster-reduction "information spectrum". At one end, there is information means and mechanisms available to inform and mobilize people and organizations about disaster reduction and the Decade. This is essentially public information and awareness-raising. At the other end there is information and data for use in the assessment, planning and application of disaster reduction.

Promotion and Marketing of Disaster Reduction and the IDNDR.

In particular, the Secretariat will seek to create a far more aware and receptive environment for Disaster Reduction and the Decade. By early 1994, the Secretariat will develop a capacity and strategy to take advantage of promotional opportunities (in particular after international news-making disasters) and to encourage IDNDR partners to do likewise - and to promote and market in the disaster reduction /IDNDR "message" in a ways that can appeal to the general public in different countries. As a first step this will entail having media/public relations capacity within the Secretariat so as to interact effectively, and as opportunities arise, promptly with the general and specialized audio-visual and print media

With respect to public information and awareness raising, the Secretariat intends to develop and exploit still more effectively two "tools" which have met with some success - the IDNDR Newsletter "STOP Disasters" and the annual IDNDR Day. The electronic networking and information dissemination capacity of UNINET will be exploited

STOP Disasters.

With respect to the Newsletter, distribution will be monitored and analyzed annually to ensure that it is reaching persons and organizations likely to benefit most from it. "Reader satisfaction" surveys will also be conducted annually (the first by the end of 1993) to provide guidance on content and editorial policy. Subject to the results of the 1993 survey, funds will be sought by which to increase production to 30,000 copies, and arrangements made for translation into Russian, and other languages if desired and financially possible. As the Secretariat establishes regional representation, the information provided by STOP Disasters will be complemented within the Regions by regional newsletters

IDNDR Day.

With respect to IDNDR day, the Secretariat will increase its promotional efforts, notably by seeking increased activism by IDNDR National Committees and Focal Points. The Secretariat will also seek adoption of IDNDR Day by global affiliates of major organizations such as UNICEF and UNESCO National Committees, by National Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies, by commercial organizations, and organizations directly concerned by IDNDR day themes.

Global Electronic Access to IDNDR Information.

With respect to UNIENET, the Secretariat, in collaboration with the DHA-Geneva staff concerned, will 1) ensure that information on different aspects of the Decade is available and up to date 2) strive to expand the membership to involve more participants from the disaster-reduction constituency and 3) by various means promote the use of UNIENET as a quick and inexpensive means of communicating and exchanging information on the IDNDR.

With respect to information and data for use in the assessment, planning and application of disaster reduction, the Secretariat will ensure that a comprehensive review is made of sources of such information and data, and that the means and procedures for accessing this information and data can be easily determined from points worldwide. There is a large, growing, but fragmented body of information worldwide relating to disaster reduction. One of the Decade's main challenges is making such information available to those who need it, where and when they need it, and in a useable form. The Secretariat, drawing on the UNDRO's many years of familiarity with such sources of information and networks, is in a strong and central position to see that by the Decade's end, a "Disaster-Reduction Information Referral System" - (possibly comparable or complementary to UNEP's INFOTERRA).

AREA 4: IDNDR SECRETARIAT PERFORMANCE AND CAPACITY.

Strategic Objective.

To ensure that throughout the Decade, the IDNDR Secretariat plays its part effectively and efficiently and that it has the human, financial and physical resources to do so.

Indicators of Secretariat Achievement:

- Positive impressions among IDNDR actors worldwide about IDNDR Secretariat responsiveness to their queries and needs.
 - Funding of core Secretariat functions and staff assured for next two years.
 - High morale and sense of achievement among Secretariat Staff.
 - Positive results of Periodic External Reviews of IDNDR Secretariat performance.
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Description.

For the IDNDR Secretariat to play its part in the Decade, several conditions must be met.

These conditions relate to the institutional context, organization, technical competence, numbers and professional/distribution of staff, methodology and procedures, physical facilities and equipment and financial resources, and relationship to other IDNDR actors or potential actors.

Monitoring the Decade's Progress and Formulating Proposals in Consequence.

Planning and Carrying out the Secretariat's Work.

The Secretariat will work in a manner that is rational and productive with respect to the global advancement of disaster reduction in general and to the IDNDR objective and goals in particular. To this end the Secretariat is drawing up the present IDNDR Secretariat Strategy, and Operating Plan to implement the Strategy. The Strategy will be reviewed periodically, and Operating Plan kept up to date, and both will be revised if relevant internal or external factors change. The Strategy and the Operating Plan will thus, at any given time provide the Secretariat Management, or external parties concerned, with a good picture of what and how the Secretariat is doing and plans to do. The Strategy and Operating Plan will feed information into reports, financial or planning submissions routinely required. They will also help guide and substantiate the fund-raising and resource mobilization to meet the Secretariat's needs.

As a means of monitoring the Secretariat's performance, of bringing about any needed changes to improve it, and of providing "transparency" in the use of funds and resources, the Secretariat will arrange for external reviews of its work every two years

Rationalizing and Capitalizing on Disaster Reduction Resources within DHA.

The Secretariat's "institutional context" is the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA). The Secretariat will insure a position within the DHA structure that is rational, clear, and which facilitates inter-action with other parts of the UN System concerned with disaster reduction. At the same time, this position will ensure direct and responsive relationships with disaster reduction organizations and mechanism worldwide, notably IDNDR entities recommended and or established by the General Assembly and the UN Secretary General (IDNDR National Committees, the Special High Level Council, the Scientific and Technical Committee ..).

The Secretariat will reinforce and consolidate that part of the Department concerned with Disaster Reduction - i.e. the Secretariat itself and the Disaster Mitigation Branch - through integration and rationalization of respective activities. It will also seek appropriate advantage from existing programmes and resources within the Department which can contribute to the Secretariat's capacity. These include, for example, certain aspects of the UNDP/DHA Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP), the United Nations Emergency Information Network (UNIENET), and the considerable information relating to disaster-reduction programmes, organizations and activities the world over, which is collected in DHA-Geneva reference library, country and programme files over twenty years of work in this area first by UNDRO and recently by DHA itself

With respect to the integration and rationalization of activities between the Secretariat and Disaster Mitigation Branch, a single organizational entity for Disaster Reduction will be established comprising the two entities under the guidance of the Director of the IDNDR Secretariat. The activities of the Disaster Mitigation Branch, organized geographically, will be oriented towards achievement of the Goals and Objectives of the IDNDR. The Secretariat will focus on the promotion of disaster-reduction, and the Disaster Mitigation Branch on the application of disaster reduction. Through the experience, expertise and contacts of the Disaster Mitigation Branch, the IDNDR Secretariat will seek to ensure that it has available the necessary resources and ability to monitor and assess national capacities for disaster reduction, advise on measures to increase these, and help ensure that international assistance is found if needed.

Geographical Organization and Capacity.

With the Disaster Mitigation Branch, the Secretariat intends to develop a Geographical Organization (Regional/Country desks) as rapidly as possible. This is essential for the regional/country focus of Strategy Area 1, and a means of considerably facilitating interaction with interested international organizations, and governmental/intergovernmental Aid entities which are virtually all geographically organized. The five Professional staff now in the Disaster Mitigation Branch are too few to provide this geographical coverage. But they can provide a core of expertise, which can be gradually expanded as additional staff are made available on secondment, or recruitment against contributions to the IDNDR Trust Fund.

The IDNDR Secretariat must have the human, financial and physical resources sufficient to its task, and to be in a position to plan and act proactively. These will be sought and planned for two year periods. The Secretariats should expend a minimum of effort in fund raising and resource mobilization for itself. Staff on extra-budgetary posts need to be assured of employment one-year contracts at a minimum. The Professional Staff, and in proportional numbers the General Service staff, will be increased by various means so that all areas of the Secretariat's Strategy are properly covered.

Secondment of staff from other organizations will be sought whenever possible, with the requisite skills to perform clearly defined functions. In particular, efforts will be made to obtain staff on full or part-time secondment from UN Organizations as recommended by GA Resolution 44/236.

Ensuring Adequate Physical Facilities and Resources.

The Secretariat will obtain physical facilities that will enable staff to work effectively and efficiently, to house the necessary reference documents and materials, to accommodate visiting experts and working groups, and to project an institutional (IDNDR) identity. Computer hardware and software (and training for their use), connection to local and wide area networks, direct telephone and telefax, and high volume photo-copying, must be readily available.

Organization of Major Events - The World Conference.

SECTION 2. THE IDNDR TODAY - A SECRETARIAT PERSPECTIVE.

General Impact.

A third of the Decade has passed. In some countries, some organizations and some scientific associations, are using the IDNDR as a framework or promotional mechanism for disaster reduction. But, in general, the Decade has not had the impact hoped for outside of its original constituency - the scientific community - and some already "convinced" practitioners of disaster reduction. Attention to scientific and technological aspects and approaches is not matched by attention to management, legislative, planning, developmental and socio-economic aspects. At present, there is little promise that by the year 2000 the Decade will bring results more significant than those that would have occurred through disaster reduction activities undertaken in the normal course of events, had there been no Decade.

Two thirds of the Decade are still left. The ten-year window of opportunities for disaster reduction may now number six years, but it remains open. The original logic of the Decade remains valid. What has worked poorly can be made to work well; what has worked well can be made to work better. Broadly speaking, there must be major improvements in: the identification and matching of disaster reduction needs to resources, concerted international action, global marketing of disaster reduction, IDNDR organization and mechanisms.

Meeting the Decade's Objective and Goals and Determining Progress.

The UN General Assembly set one Objective and five Goals for the Decade, as follows (summary¹²):

Objective: To reduce through concerted international action, especially in developing countries, the loss of life, property damage and social and economic disruption caused by natural disasters. ."

Goals:: 1) To improve the capacity of each country to mitigate the effects of natural disasters expeditiously and effectively...; 2) To devise appropriate guidelines and strategies for applying existing scientific and technical knowledge; 3) To foster scientific and engineering endeavours aimed at closing critical gaps in knowledge in order to reduce loss of life and property; 4) to disseminate existing and new technical information related to . assessment, prediction and mitigation of natural disasters 5) To develop measures for the assessment, prediction prevention and mitigation of natural disasters

That the objective can be met by the end of the Decade is improbable, as the trend towards increased damage and disruption is too strong to be reversed in such a short time. It is implicit that the reduction is not itself necessarily to be accomplished within the Decade, but that there must be made a concerted international effort which will eventually lead to a reduction. To some this will be self-evident, but to most, the objective will taken at face value will be misleading or appear unrealistic.

The goals are general, and it will be difficult to determine progress in meeting them.

If, on the one hand, there are to be meaningful improvements in disaster reduction capacities, concepts, and technologies, and on the other hand, monitoring and evaluation of the Decade's effectiveness and value in bringing about these improvements, then "base lines" must be determined early in the Decade.

The Report (11 April 1989) of the International Ad Hoc Group of Experts gave a very general survey of these base lines. But clear summary "base lines" of national disaster reduction capacities at the start of the Decade, and of concepts and technologies are not now available.

¹² For the full texts see the Annex to Resolution 44/236

"Concerted International Action" for Disaster Reduction.

GA Resolution 44/236 calls for reducing natural disasters through "concerted international action". This is not happening. The UN System's involvement is piecemeal. Major international NGOs (IFRC, Save the Children, Oxfam, World Vision) are even less involved. With a few exceptions, Governments, including traditional donors, show no major commitments towards greater allocation of effort or resources to disaster reduction. The private sector remains largely unsolicited and uninvolved. International print and audio-visual media show little sign of awareness of the IDNDR's existence, let alone of interesting the general public in disaster reduction.

Concerted over what to do ...

A purpose, or several purposes, for the IDNDR can be inferred from a growing number of public statements about what the Decade is to do, or does, and what is to be achieved or is being achieved during this period. These statements can be found in: UN General Assembly Resolutions concerning the Decade, notably in the "International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction" which gives one Objective and Five Goals for the Decade; in the Tokyo Declaration (11 April 1989) of the International Ad Hoc Group of Experts for the IDNDR; in the Targets, Programme Framework, and Guidelines established by the IDNDR Scientific and Technical Committee; the New York Declaration (10 October 1991) and the Twelve Point Plan of Action (25 January 1993) of the IDNDR Special High Level Council; various statements of prominent officials, or of organizations involved in the Decade; public information documents and brochures on the IDNDR.

But not over Who and How

Internationally, it is not clear who is taking responsibility for what. While a detailed international implementation plan or programme is neither desirable, nor possible, a broad agreement from those interested and able to take lead responsibility for addressing the main issues and problems which the Decade is meant to solve, is both possible and needed.

Involvement of International Actors and Sectors Concerned

The United Nations System

With programmes, projects and other activities of the UN System across the globe in practically every field, sector, or discipline, relevant to disaster reduction - and indeed in most cases involved for many years in disaster-reduction, it is no surprise that most major official statements, plans, or policies on the IDNDR call on concerted and major involvement of the UN System in the Decade. The United Nations Steering Committee for the IDNDR comprised representatives from twenty-two organizations of the UN System. The Decade itself is under the "auspices of the United Nations".¹³ The Ad hoc Group of Experts envisioned that "each organization of the United Nations System would prepare its own action plan for the Decade in the context of the overall programme for the Decade"¹⁴ "Action to be Taken by the United Nations System" in the International Framework for Action of the IDNDR "(urged) the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations to accord priority, as appropriate and in a concerted manner, to natural disaster preparedness, prevention, relief and short term recovery in their operational activities", and to "assist in the formulation and implementation during the Decade

¹³ GA Res 42/169 of 11 December 1987

¹⁴ Report of the Secretary General to ECOSOC, A/44/322/Add 1, of 14 August 1989.

of public information programmes aimed at raising public awareness of disaster prevention."¹⁵

In both the reports submitted to date by the Secretary General on the implementation of the IDNDR, the disaster-related activities of a good number of UN Organizations are summarized. Of these two organizations, WHO and WMO, have defined specific IDNDR programmes/plans of action.

Aside from the hope of the Ad hoc Group of Experts - expressed above - that each organization of the United Nations would prepare its own action plan for the Decade, there has been no other explicit statement of expectation of such alignment with the Decade. Most organizations, with evident interest and involvement in disaster reduction, have reported on ongoing programmes and activities, citing them as reflective of the Decade's goals and objectives, but the vast majority of Agencies have not made the institutional commitment to clearly identify IDNDR programmes. This is one reflection of what the UN Inter-Agency Working Group called "the limited success with which the UN System has embraced the IDNDR concept" and "(there is) lack of a clear vision on the part of the UN System and no strategic continuity."¹⁶

That the Decade be used to record, highlight and publicize disaster-reduction activities of the UN System - or of any other organization - is proper and to be encouraged so that these activities gain additional prominence. This however, is a passive, minimalist use of the Decade. For implicit in the Decade is that what is being done is insufficient, and that there must be qualitative and quantitative increases in disaster-reduction activity or at the very least, considerably raised awareness worldwide. The Secretariat thus strongly endorses the views of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on the matter, and believes that UN Agencies must be encouraged to define plans of action or programmes that are clearly identifiable with the IDNDR, and are publicized as such.

IDNDR Institutional Context, Organizational Structures and Mechanisms

The mechanisms established specifically for the IDNDR have not fulfilled their potential. Members of the Special High Level Council are not systematically involved and encouraged to use their influence and authority to promote disaster reduction. The composition of the Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) reflects only partially the breadth of the professional disciplines which disaster reduction concerns. There are only some sixty IDNDR National Committees worldwide, of which a significant number are inactive and/or not constituted or functioning as expected. The UN IDNDR Steering Committee is virtually non-functional.

The IDNDR has led to the establishment of five main entities to advise on or to carry out Decade activities. They are, the Special High Level Council, the Scientific and Technical Committee, National Committees, and the IDNDR Secretariat. Additionally, as specifically concerns the UN System, there is a UN Inter-Agency Steering Committee, and a UN Inter-Agency Working Group. There follows below an assessment, from the Secretariat's perspective, of the adequacy of these entities, and recommendations on how to overcome limitations experienced to date.

The Special High Level Council (SHLC).

The Special High Level Council was established by the General Assembly as one of the "organizational arrangements of the Decade" to "provide (the Secretary-General) with general advice with respect to the Decade, take appropriate action to promote public awareness and mobilize the necessary support from

¹⁵ Annex to GA Resolution 44/236

¹⁶ Report of the IAWG, 13th Session, December 1992

the public and private sectors " Ten prominent persons were appointed in 1991 for indefinite terms. They have met twice in New York At the first meeting they issued a "New York Declaration", and at the second a "Twelve Point Plan of Action".

The association of prominent persons with important causes has potential value. But for the potential to be realized, the association of such persons with the causes must be widely known, and the persons must actively engage themselves in furthering the cause through their channels of influence and authority. In the case of the SHLC, little publicity has been given to the existence of the SHLC and the association of its members with Disaster Reduction. Furthermore, the Secretariat has not been able to actively support and interact with members of the SHLC in fulfilling their own decision, expressed in the New York Declaration to "undertake individual activities on behalf of the Decade at the regional, sub-regional and national levels, particularly in increasing public awareness of natural hazards and in mobilizing resource and stimulating political support for disaster-mitigation strategies."

The Scientific and Technical Committee (STC).

The Scientific and Technical Committee, also part of the General Assembly's designated "organizational arrangements of the Decade", was to "develop overall programmes to be taken into account in bilateral and multilateral co-operation for the Decade, paying attention to priorities and gaps in technical knowledge identified at the national level, in particular by national committees, as well as to assess and evaluate activities carried out in the course of the Decade and to make recommendations on the overall programmes in an annual report to the Secretary-General."

The STC was formed in March 1990. Its members were appointed by the Secretary-General for an unspecified period. The current membership (originally 24) comprises an equal number of persons from industrialized and developing countries. Nine of these are from scientific governmental entities, nine are from scientific academic/research entities, two respectively from public health and industrial academic bodies, one from the "private sector (engineering) and one from the press."¹⁷

The STC has an important advisory and evaluative role to play - of "activities carried out in the course of the Decade" and of the Decade's "overall programmes". To play this role, the STC must have a breadth of expertise which corresponds to the breadth of disaster-related activities and programmes required in any local, national, regional or global disaster reduction strategies appropriate to either the IDNDR Objective and Goals adopted by the General Assembly, or the three targets for each country set by the STC itself. It is apparent that while there is depth of expertise, there is less breadth. Notably there are critical omissions, which the STC has pointed out, in the disciplines of emergency management, developmental and economic planning, sociology and psychology, communications, and remote sensing. Also missing is adequate representation from the political, commercial, NGO, visual media, environmental planning and management, public education, sectors are now marginally or not at all involved.

National IDNDR Committees - and Focal Points

The General Assembly in 1987 called on Governments to establish national (IDNDR) committees " . to survey(ing) available mechanisms and facilities for the reduction of natural hazards (sic), assessing the particular requirements of their respective countries or regions in order add to, improve or update existing mechanisms and facilities and develop a strategy to attain the desired (IDNDR) goals." This was followed in July 1988 by a letter from the then Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation to NY diplomatic missions asking that respective Governments set up these Committees, and so report to the UN. With the establishment of the IDNDR Secretariat in 1990 , and

See Annex 2 for Matrix "Survey of IDNDR Scientific and Technical Committee "

notably after the appointment of a Secretariat Desk Officer for National Committees, renewed efforts were made to encourage the designation of National Committees, or at least of "IDNDR focal points". Guidelines for purpose, composition, and functions of the national committees were drawn up and disseminated. These guidelines, attached as Annex 2, were derived partly from relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and partly from STC proposals.

The STC has stated that "the National Committees not only have the central role in stimulating national and local disaster-reduction activities, but also can contribute to regional and international undertakings. The STC and the SHLC underscored the importance of this role by both recommending that Committee representatives be convened at the 1994 World Conference to review progress at the IDNDR's midterm; these recommendations were endorsed by the General Assembly in 1991.¹⁸

As reported to the STC at its fourth Session (New Delhi, 1-5 February 1993)¹⁹, as of January 1993, sixty-one countries had formed National Committees, and fifty-one IDNDR Focal Points. About half of the sixty-one National Committees appear not to have proceeded beyond an initial endorsement of the aims of the IDNDR; repeated Secretariat attempts to elicit information about programmes and activities have been unsuccessful.

For National Committees to be effective, their membership should be representative of the range of sectors and expertise relevant to disaster reduction. This was underscored by the General Assembly.²⁰ The STC stated, "an inter-disciplinary and inter-agency involvement is essential, involving those responsible for disaster-reduction activities both in the public and private sector". On the basis of information provided to the Secretariat, only five National Committees (Germany, Jamaica, New Zealand, Nigeria and the USA) have followed this model. Whereas most National Committees include representatives from the Government, the other "partners" - non-governmental organizations, the media, and the private sector in general - are poorly represented. Some Committees, moreover, have an exclusively scientific orientation.

It is quite clear that there is a serious discrepancy between the intended role of the National Committees and the role which, with some notable exceptions, National Committees are now playing, often because of their unbalanced composition. By way of illustrating this point, the World Conference which had been proposed as World Conference of National Committees, could not now be envisaged in this way, there being such a low percentage of National Committees established, let alone Committees of the expected breadth and level of activity.

The Secretariat considers that there are several probable reasons for the National Committees falling short of expectation. These include

- The Secretariat's limitations and consequent difficulties in making available sufficient attention and resources for a stimulating, supportive and interactive role with respect to National Committees.
- The lack of a clearly stated function for National Committees and place of National Committees within the overall strategy and events of the Decade.
- A lack of international and/or national "validation" of the IDNDR National Committees as actors in disaster reduction, and of association with disaster reduction activities.
- No significant "value added" for IDNDR National Committees and their members over existing

¹⁸ UN GA Res 46/149

¹⁹ IDNDR Secretariat Report IDNDR/STC/1993/3, "Review of the Development of National Committees and Programmes", 6 January 1993.

²⁰ See GA Resolution A/42/169

organizations and mechanisms or the members' regular responsibilities.

- A lack of capacity and funds among most National Committees to formulate and sustain a National Committee programme and interact routinely on it with other national or international actors.

Additionally, in certain instances, the Secretariat notes the risk of National Committees, or National Committee members proposing major projects for international funding and/or technical assistance either to the Secretariat or to donors without going through established national procedures for planning and coordination of development and related international assistance.

The UN Steering Committee for the IDNDR.

The UN Steering Committee for the IDNDR was set up in February 1988 by the Secretary-General at The Committee consisted of representatives from close to thirty UN entities concerned by disaster reduction. The Secretary-General's Report to ECOSOC²¹ continued these arrangements for the Steering Committee, stating that the Committee was responsible for "ensuring that the activities and the full potential of the United Nations system are integrated in the programme of the Decade", and that the Committee would be chaired by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation. The Committee has met twice

The Secretariat notes the small number of meetings, the rank of attendees, the weak follow-up to decisions and proposals made at the meetings, and the fragmented nature of the UN "adoption" of the Decade. To the Secretariat this indicates that as a mechanism "to ensure that the activities and the full potential of the United Nations system are integrated in the programme of the Decade", the Committee is not effective. Furthermore, with the adoption of GA Res 46/182, the elimination of the post of DIEC, and the creation of DHA and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), there is likelihood of duplication with the this Committee. the Steering Committee's confirmation needs to be secured, and a replacement chairmanship needs to be designated.

The Secretariat recognizes that part of this ineffectiveness has probably resulted from Secretariat's own very limited capacity to "support" the Steering Committee as originally specified. It also considers that the purpose of this high-level Committee (to ensure that the activities and the full potential of the United Nations are integrated in the programme of the Decade) is not only valid, but important to meaningful and uniform institutional adoption of the Decade by the UN System

The UN Inter-Agency Working Group for the IDNDR.

The UN Inter-Agency Working Group for the IDNDR was set up early in the Decade. The Working Group initially consisted of representatives from substantive sections of UN organizations.. The Working-Group has met fifteen times, chaired by Directors or Acting Directors of the Secretariat. Recently, the IDNDR Secretariat has invited participation of representatives of non-UN interest groups and organizations concerned by the IDNDR.

The Secretariat believes that meetings of the Group have provided useful opportunities for officials with disaster management responsibilities at technical levels to exchange ideas, and in some instances to initiate IDNDR-specific activities. (The Group was also useful as a formal interest body, able to draw the attention of the UN Secretariat's Senior Staff to the IDNDR Secretariat's continued instability as it demonstrated at its 12th meeting (December 1993)) However, the Working Group has had to operate in an uneven UN System IDNDR policy framework, and interacting with a weak Secretariat, has served

²¹ International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, Report of the Secretary General, Economic and Social Council A/44/322 of 20 June 1989

more as an informal advisory body. A clear work programme of areas of specific attention have not been defined

IDNDR/Disaster Reduction Awareness and Information.

The term International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and the objectives, goals, targets, strategies, are understandable to varying degrees. At one end of the spectrum are the scientists, technicians, disaster managers and academics who routinely work on disaster related issues, and can readily understand and identify with the concepts and terminology. In between, and at the other end of the spectrum, are the vast majority of people who will understand less, little, or nothing about the Decade. Yet the "lack of public and political awareness is an often cited reason for lack of attention, effort and investment in disaster reduction measures." This awareness is needed, and the IDNDR is meant to help raise it. Committees, formal resolutions and declarations are not sufficient. The message of the Decade must be promoted, popularized and marketed, like any other societal message on public safety and well-being.

The IDNDR Secretariat.

At the request of the General Assembly, the UN Secretary-General established the IDNDR Secretariat as a UN entity, to service an international programme. The organizational changes within the UN Secretariat, and the staffing and financial constraints on the IDNDR Secretariat, have made it difficult to establish and project a clear institutional context for the IDNDR Secretariat. This is important for two main reasons. First, the IDNDR Secretariat cannot "service" the Decade internationally or have any credible focal point role if the Secretariat's own place and relationships in the UN's disaster management structure are not absolutely clear to all concerned. Secondly, disaster reduction issues have been addressed for years at UNDRO and now DHA-Geneva, and resources, experience, knowledge and "access" to disaster-reduction actors worldwide, needed by the IDNDR Secretariat, are directly available only if the Secretariat is clearly part of the DHA structure. Thirdly, any prospect of reducing the IDNDR Secretariat's dependency on extrabudgetary funding (should this be determined preferable to the present situation) depends on being part of a structure that is already largely supported by the regular budget.

This being said, it is necessary to ensure that the IDNDR Secretariat is able, and is seen to be able to service the Decade as an International and not simply as a UN Decade. The Secretariat must therefore be responsive worldwide, either itself or through appropriate channels and organizations, to concerns that might not "normally" come within the purview of a UN programme or organization.

The IDNDR Secretariat faces an uphill task in overcoming past weaknesses and frequent changes of leadership. Its human and financial resources remain inadequate to its function. At the present funding level, the IDNDR Trust Fund is so severely depleted that the Secretariat will hardly be able to operate up to the World Conference, cannot provide sufficient resources to fulfil commitments on preparing for the World Conference and will only be able to pay existing staff (other than seconded or project staff) until the Conference. The Secretariat is now a part of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, within the Department's structure at the UN Office in Geneva.²² DHA has been perceived as marginally concerned with natural disasters, and still less with natural disaster reduction and related capacity

²² Initially, the Secretariat functioned "at the United Nations Office in Geneva (UNOG), in close association with the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator," as provided for in the Annex to GA Resolution 44/236. It reported to the then Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation (DIEC). This changed with the adoption of GA Resolution 46/182, the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs - absorbing UNDRO's functions - and the elimination of the post and office of the DIEC

building. Emphasis on the term "relief to development continuum" has diminished appreciation of the full disaster and development continuum which has traditionally also included prevention, (mitigation), and preparedness.

However, the IDNDR Secretariat's main staffing problem - the appointment of a Director- has been resolved. The present rationalization of disaster reduction activities and staff within DHA can make part of the missing expertise available to the Secretariat quickly without having to raise additional outside resources. Furthermore, the twenty years of UNDRO's involvement in disaster-reduction has brought to DHA, and potentially to the IDNDR Secretariat, a wealth of information, international networks and contacts, and country-based technical assistance experience. Similarly, the ongoing UNDP/DHA Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP) is a practical mechanism for "concerting international effort" at regional and country levels.

Rationalization of Disaster Reduction within DHA

The Disaster Mitigation Branch, formerly within UNDRO and now within DHA, addresses "other than relief" aspects of disaster management; disaster prevention, mitigation, and preparedness - what in the IDNDR terminology is called disaster reduction. The DMB undertakes analyses of disaster management profiles and capacities, formulates technical assistance projects, and in certain instances carries them out. The DMB also promotes disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness through publications, participation in specialized meetings and workshops, etc

**APPENDIX 1 TO SECTION 2. MATRIX SHOWING SECTORS AND DISCIPLINES COVERED BY
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

DRAFT OF: 2 October 1993

**APPENDIX 2 TO SECTION 2 MATRIX SHOWING SECTORS AND DISCIPLINES COVERED BY
NATIONAL COMMITTEES.**