

CONTENTS

Introduction - *Page 4*

- Overview
- Terms of reference
- Methodology

Part I – Review and Evaluation of the period 1998-1999 - *page 5*

A. Framework - *Page 5*

- . the IDNDR
- . the 1998-1999 Action Plan

B. Strategy - *Page 7*

C. Implementation – *Page 7*

1. Partners/Audience – *page 7*

2. Promotion tools – *page 7*

- Printed material
- Audiovisuals
- Resource Centre

3. World Disaster Reduction Campaigns – *page 11*

a) Background

b) Themes

c) Activities

- .Support tools

- .Partnerships

- .Photo contest

- .Internet conference

- .World Disaster Reduction Day

4 Regional, thematic events and the Programme Forum – *page 15*

a) Thematic meetings

- Radius

- El Nino

- Early warning

b) Regional Meetings

c) Programme Forum

D. Results – *Page 19*

1. Promotion Tools
2. World Disaster Reduction Campaigns
3. Events

E. Impact – *Page 24*

- At the international level
- At the national and local levels

Part II – Recommendations – *Page 25*

A. Strategy

B. Objectives

C. Implementation

1. World Disaster Reduction Campaign
2. Advocacy tools
3. Media and public relations
4. Partnerships

ANNEX

Introduction

Overview

The International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR 1990-2000), has been both a strategic ten-year international programme for disaster prevention and a high profile institutional organization within the framework of the United Nations. The Decade came to its conclusion on 31 December, 1999.

Since 1st January, 2000, the IDNDR has been succeeded by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). This new substantive programme will be the responsibility of an Inter-Agency Task Force and a Secretariat under the direct authority of the UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs ¹.

Since its establishment, the IDNDR has been a leader in the field of disaster reduction advocacy supported by the development of appropriate policies and the co-ordination of institutional capacities. With the adoption in 1998-1999 of the IDNDR Action Plan, a strategic framework was put in place to ensure these efforts would be carried through into the 21st century.

The ISDR will continue to build a culture of prevention. Its programme of advocacy activities will encompass the universal, cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary nature of disaster reduction. It will be in line with the UN reform and the need to shift towards a multilateral platform which will enable the international community to deal with the risks and challenges of the future in a pro-active and effective manner - climate change is the first concern of this century according to the participants of the 2000 World Economic Forum ².

Terms of reference

This report will evaluate the effectiveness of the promotion activities of the IDNDR Secretariat for the period of its 1998-1999 Action Plan, including activities related to thematic and regional events; and make recommendations for the conduct of ongoing activities within the framework of ISDR and in an intradepartmental context, including the OCHA Geneva and OCHA New York offices.

¹ See Annex I ISDR resolution

² See annex II article on a questionnaire to the World Economic Forum participants in Davos. *Le Monde* 24 January 2000

Methodology

In Part I, activities carried out during the period concerned have been analysed and evaluated. The analysis incorporates the two-fold nature of promotion:

- a) the pro-active and dynamic approach which aims to create events, build on new partnerships, reach a larger audience and new target groups,
- b) the support nature of promotion which is to publicise thematic and regional events and activities carried out by the Secretariat.

In Part II, recommendations for future activities within the framework of ISDR, and in an intra-departmental context, will be proposed so as:

- a) to promote disaster reduction and risk management in the 21st century in a feasible and efficient manner within the ISDR framework
- b) to present the UN response to natural disasters where prevention, preparedness, response and rehabilitation are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

PART I – Review and Evaluation of the period 1998-1999

A. Framework

• The IDNDR

As a response to the increased frequency and disastrous impact of natural disasters throughout the world in the late 1980s, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the 1990s to be the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. Its overall objective, as defined in the resolution 44/236 of 1989, was to reduce through concerted international action, the loss of life, property damage, and social and economic disruption caused by natural disasters. The developing countries were to be especially targeted. The international framework for action was adopted.

IDNDR worked through IDNDR National Committees and Focal Points based in 141 countries. An IDNDR Scientific and Technical Committee was the Decade's advisory body of 25 experts drawn from various fields world-wide. A UN Interagency Steering Committee on IDNDR met regularly as did a contact group of Geneva based diplomatic missions. The IDNDR was under the overall authority of the UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs.

The IDNDR goals and objectives expressed in GA resolution 44/236 were reviewed and further refined at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction convened by the United Nations in Yokohama (Japan) in 1994. The Yokohama Conference was a milestone event and a turning point in the IDNDR process. It also introduced new strategies for the second half of the Decade as reflected by the adoption of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action.

The new strategies were characterised by: an emphasis on social sciences; a focus on public policy; the development of regional and sub-regional approaches; a shift from

emergency preparedness to the reduction of vulnerability and risk ; an emphasis on concrete application of science and technology to disaster reduction.

At this time, the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction identified some gaps in the implementation of the IDNDR, notwithstanding achievements in the domains of training, technical applications and research at local, national and international levels and in regional co-operation.

Awareness of the potential benefits of disaster reduction was still limited to specialised circles and had not yet been successfully communicated to all sectors of society. It was noted that not all entities of the United Nations system had fully contributed to the Decade's implementation. This led to the adoption of the 1998 – 1999 Action Plan.

- **The 1998-1999 Action Plan³**

Based on the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action, the IDNDR Secretariat initiated an Action Plan for the concluding years of the Decade 1998-1999. It was a strategic framework for the implementation of result-oriented activities. The plan was to establish disaster prevention as an essential element of sustainable development policies.

The primary strategic approaches for the Action Plan 1998-1999 were to identify future disaster trends, set up priorities, develop a comprehensive disaster reduction strategy for the 21st century and develop future functional and institutional options for disaster reduction.

The Plan was built around five major themes, which the IDNDR Secretariat promoted through its advocacy, policy and co-ordination activities: hazard, vulnerability and risk assessment; disaster prevention and sustainable development; improved early warning; political and public policy commitment; shared knowledge and technology transfer.

To implement the Plan, the IDNDR Secretariat developed specific targeted activities such as the Radius Initiative for urban seismic assessment, the El Niño interagency preventive approach, as well as annual world-wide promotion and information campaigns. Thematic events and conferences were organised in collaboration with United Nations agencies and others partners.

Progress made during the Decade was reviewed in 1999 through IDNDR National Committee meetings and IDNDR conferences which were organised on a regional basis. All these activities culminated in the Programme Forum, which took place in Geneva from 5 to 9 July 1999.

³ See Annex III. List of IDNDR events 1998-1999

The target of the original programme was that by year 2000 all countries should have in place: comprehensive national assessments of risk from natural hazards; mitigation plans of practical measures that address disaster prevention, preparedness and community awareness; ready access to warning systems at all levels.

B. Strategy

The IDNDR's promotion and public awareness strategy was to ensure that target audiences are aware of disaster mitigation issues and incorporate key concepts into international, regional, national and local plans, policies and programmes.

This had to be achieved through the facilitation of the following means:

- (a) ensuring that effective networks were established to act as a resource tool for partner organisations, for the sharing of lessons learned and identification of best practice,
- (b) helping partners to be better able to communicate key disaster mitigation messages to their target audiences,
- (c) enhance the capacity of partners to develop effective promotion and information strategies.

C. Implementation

1. Partners/Audience

Target groups included a wide range of leaders and decision-makers at the international, national and local levels, disaster managers, scientists, academics, media. In order to sustain mitigation measures and adopt sound policies which can protect community assets and resources, Governments need broad public support. Therefore it was also essential to target activities at civil society in order to develop public understanding of hazards and awareness of risks, sensitise, mobilise the general public on disaster prevention issues.

Partners included the 141 IDNDR National Committees and focal points, UN agencies and IGOs, international and local NGOs, scientific and academic bodies and the media.

Partnerships both within and outside the IDNDR network were established whenever possible in order to reflect the multi-faced approach of disaster reduction, and to respond to the non-operational structure of IDNDR.

Synergies were always sought in order to multiply the effect. Partnership was also considered as a cost-effective way to produce results and undertake activities for an organisation faced with limited human and financial resources.

2. Promotion Tools

The identification, preparation and dissemination of suitable information was considered a fundamental aspect of the public awareness strategy. This involved organising different types

of materials for effective use and finding the most appropriate means of delivering the information to target audiences.

Promotion tools were produced within the general requirements of a quality and target oriented approach. Attractive presentations with a substantive and text were used to enhance their visibility.

- **Printed material**⁴

Leaflets. Given that promotion and public awareness activities were based on promoting disaster reduction rather than an image of an international organisation, it was nevertheless considered a priority in early 1998 to produce basic and concise information about the Decade, its programme and the activities of the Secretariat. In early 1998, "The IDNDR: Background and Primary Themes"⁵ and "IDNDR Action Plan 1998-1999"⁶, were produced and disseminated.

Announcements. Regional and thematic meetings which took place in 1998 and 1999 including the Programme Forum were announced through flyers. These included: the Regional IDNDR/ESCAP Conference for Asia; the IDNDR/UNEP Conference for Africa⁷; The Paris Conference On Natural Disaster Reduction, Land-Use Planning and Sustainable Development; the IDNDR Programme Forum.

Posters illustrating the theme of the WDR Campaigns were produced and disseminated to all IDNDR partners in English, French, Spanish and in 1998, in Russian⁸.

Brochures: The following were produced and disseminated: "Natural Disaster Reduction. Where do we go from here?", "The UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction, 1997-1998 World Disaster Reduction Campaigns Activities."

Media Kits on the World Disaster Reduction Campaigns⁹, the Programme Forum and El Niño were produced in collaboration with partners and disseminated.

Press releases were produced and disseminated regularly. Some of them were jointly prepared with WMO on EL Nino, with GFZ on RADIUS, with ESCAP/Bangkok for the Asia Meeting, with UNEP for the Africa Meeting. Their frequency increased: 10 in 1998, 20 in 1999.

Periodical printed material

Highlights. A monthly bulletin entitled "IDNDR Highlights" gave brief summaries of the activities of the IDNDR Secretariat during the previous month and publicised those planned for the current month. These concise highlights (average 7 pages) were distributed via electronic mail to over 1000 IDNDR partners and other interested individuals in the disaster reduction community, as well as to the diplomatic missions and media

⁴ see Annex IV: Printed material

⁵ see annex V

⁶ see annex VI

⁷ see Annex VII

⁸ see Annex VIII

⁹ see Annex IX

Stop Disasters, the quarterly magazine of IDNDR, produced by the Stop Disasters Institute in Naples, was a vehicle for information on natural disaster reduction issues, both as an information tool on IDNDR activities and as a means of gathering and publicising information from IDNDR partners. Each publication was based on a different theme with a focus, once a year, on the World Disaster Reduction Campaign. The IDNDR Secretariat gave a grant for the translations from Italian to English, Spanish and French and provided regular inputs. The Institute kept the database of 11.000 readers up to date. A Russian version was made through a partnership with Global Eco Forum in Moscow

IDNDR Informs, a newsletter for Latin America and the Caribbean, was produced by the Regional Unit for Latin America and the Caribbean at the IDNDR Secretariat in Costa Rica. It provided an overview of current events and initiatives in disaster prevention at the regional and national level.

Exhibits. Two multipurpose exhibits (panels: 2m x 1m) on disaster reduction and IDNDR were produced in 1998 and displayed at conferences and public events organised in Geneva and world-wide, including in the context of the World Disaster Reduction Days celebrations in Geneva and Mexico.

In 1999, exhibits were part of the consolidation phase of the Decade. Based on information provided by the National Committees on ten years of progress in disaster reduction at the country level, an exhibition was prepared in Geneva and displayed in the Conference Hall of the IDNDR/ESCAP Regional Conference for Asia¹⁰. A similar exhibition for Latin America and the Caribbean was prepared by the Latin America Office and displayed at the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean in June 1999. A specific exhibition on the achievements of the Decade in each continent was produced for the Programme Forum and displayed in Geneva.

- **Audiovisuals**

Video/film activities reflect the need for modern tools of promotion and for using an innovative approach to reach the widest audience. Radio remains a major media in a number of regions, particularly in the developing countries. Radio remains the most effective method of reaching the largest number of people around the world. Its potential for advocacy purposes is outstanding. Video is a costly activity while radio remains cost-effective.

In 1998, for the first time since the beginning of the Decade, audiovisuals were produced. As this new activity had not been forecast, it was of key importance to produce in a cost effective way. This was mainly done by using UN TV facilities and services whenever possible, and by using rights-free footage on disasters and disaster reduction.

Videos

In 1998, a 6 minute video on early warning was produced for the Tampere meeting on emergency telecommunications. The early warning issue was presented in an attractive

¹⁰ see annex X

way and was primarily targeted at the participants at the meeting and IDNDR partners. Free copies in different formats were disseminated upon request.

In the context of the 1998 and 1999 World Disaster Reduction Campaigns, a video release on disaster reduction was produced each year. DPI/New York and UNESCO provided some free right footage, UNTV Geneva interviewed Mr Sergio Vieira de Mello and Mr. Philippe Boullé and ensured the editing work in collaboration with IDNDR.

In 1999, IDNDR provided facilities to the UNTV crew to film earthquake prevention in Mexico. The mission was organised by the IDNDR Secretariat with the assistance of the Mexican earthquake reduction institution, CENAPRED, and of the UN Information Centre.

Prior to the World Disaster Reduction Day, the video releases were disseminated to 90 TV networks around the world through the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) channel. The EBU headquarters are located in Geneva. The video releases were also made available upon request in various formats (NTSC, L/SECAM) to various partners or given to TV correspondents.

In addition, each year, a special effort has been made to adapt a product for CNN requirements. In 1998, IDNDR with UNESCO co-produced a 3 minute video. This was broadcast, in the space allocated to UNESCO on the CNN World Report programme, prior to the World Disaster Reduction Day. In 1999, a subject on earthquake prevention in Mexico was broadcast on CNN on the World Disaster Reduction Day.

Radio Programmes

In 1998, a 15 minute radio programme in English on disaster reduction was co-produced through fruitful collaboration between IDNDR and UNESCO. This programme has been copied and disseminated to 180 radio networks through an up to date mailing list provided by UNESCO as well as to partners upon request.

In 1999, partnership was developed with Radio France Internationale who produced a 20 minute radio programme in English on disaster reduction prior to the Programme Forum. The programme was broadcast by the RFI World Service in English. A French version was prepared and broadcast two weeks after the Event. The programme was distributed to the Programme Forum participants and partners upon request.

On-line information: www.idndr.org

At the request of the STC at its Ninth Session held in Geneva, 13-17 October 1997, the IDNDR Secretariat created a website for the regular dissemination of information relating to disaster reduction. It reached full speed in March 1999. The site included not only an archive of important documentation and data illustrating the activities of disaster reduction around the world but also ongoing activities in this field at the national, regional and international level.

The site also assembled links to important institutions and organisations that contribute to the global effort for disaster reduction.

- **Resource Centre**

Established in August 1998, the Resource Centre comprised books, monographs, journals, magazines and other documentation available for consultation within IDNDR and OCHA . The facility was also available to certain outsiders, for example, academics.

3. World Disaster Reduction Campaigns

a) Background

The World Disaster Reduction Campaigns were designed to spearhead system-wide commitment to the reduction of natural disasters and stimulate cross-sectoral debate, capacity building and co-operation at local, regional, national and international levels.

The Campaigns were based on a different theme each year providing an active and lively forum on disaster reduction, with activities that reinforced and maximised their message. The Campaign approach also helped the work of IDNDR remain focused and sustained.

An International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction was designated (Resolution 44/236) to be observed annually on the second Wednesday of October. Each year the countries around the world marked this day with special events highlighting the prevention and mitigation message of the Decade. The variety of both serious and light hearted events, appealing to people of all nationalities, ages and socio-economic groups was found to be a powerful way of passing the message. Appropriately, the Campaigns culminated in the Natural Disaster Reduction Day 1999.

b) Themes

The Campaigns gained in focus and momentum after the 1994 Yokohama Conference. Themes after this date were:

1995 – Women and Children, Key Partners For Disaster Reduction

1996 – Cities at Risk

1997 - Water, Too Much, Too Little - Leading Cause of Natural Disasters.

1998 - Natural Disaster Prevention and the Media. Prevention Begins with Information.

Initially, the theme was to have been. Respect Our Environment, Reduce Disasters. This was to complement such events as the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (April 1997) and the General Assembly special session focusing on a review of Agenda 21.

A need was then identified to reach new audiences and increase the mobilisation of the general public. Given that the media are key vectors in the dissemination of information and a vital element in awareness building, it was decided that the 1998 theme should enlist the media as working partners

1999 – Prevention Pays: Science and Technology for Disaster Prevention Save Lives and Secure Assets. After a year of devastating natural disasters, it was seen as important to send a positive message and share best practices in disaster prevention with partners in particular at the local, regional and national level. The 1999 theme had also to be consistent with the concluding phase of the Decade devoted to the evaluation of ten years of achievements in disaster reduction, and to the establishment of guidelines for a safer world in the 21st century.

c) Activities

• *Support tools*

The 1998-1999 Campaigns were both launched with the dissemination of a first announcement early in the year to all IDNDR partners, UN offices in the field, diplomatic missions, DPI in New York and UN Information Service in Geneva, announcements at the UN press briefings and on the IDNDR Website. This was a significant starting point from which all partners were made aware of activities to be undertaken by the Secretariat and the support material being made available. Partners were then able to prepare their own material accordingly.

More detailed guidelines for Campaign activities for the IDNDR partners followed the first announcement. They were to encourage a wide range of activities, such as seminars and workshops on the theme of the Campaign:

- . visits to disaster sites initiated by local representatives
- . dissemination of printed material (guidelines, brochures, posters...) on disaster reduction in local languages
- . video presentations for communities at risk followed by debates on disaster management
- . interactive audio-visuals sessions highlighting the role of media in disaster reduction and the socio-economic benefits of disaster prevention
- . training sessions and simulation exercises organised by mayor/civil protection authorities
- . games, essay-writing, drawing competitions and role plays for school children in order to train them for preparedness
- . lectures for university students.

In 1999, 'Year of the Elderly', the seniors were invited to share their own past, experience and knowledge in relation to natural disasters they had faced in their community.

• *Partnerships*

The Campaign press kits have been conceived by the IDNDR Secretariat with a dual purpose: as written material to disseminate information, and as an important step to fostering partnerships and creating a platform for the exchange of opinions that would feed the debate on disaster reduction among IDNDR partners.

The 1998 Media Kit was developed with contributions from: The World Meteorological Organisation, UNESCO; World Bank; World Tourism Organisation; Munich Reinsurance Company; Czech Hydro-Meteorological Institute; and the National Institute of Meteorology

of Costa Rica. It also contained information on IDNDR substantive activities such as Early Warning, the RADIUS Initiative and El Niño.

The strong interactive character of the 1999 IDNDR Campaign was reflected in the Campaign media kit. Contributions on best policies and practices experienced world-wide came from the National Centre for Disaster Prevention (CENAPRED) in Mexico; the National Centre of Disaster Management of India; the Department of Environmental and Geographical Sciences of the University of Cape Town, South Africa; the Australian IDNDR Co-ordination Committee; the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management of Jamaica.

Contributors also included such partners as UNESCO, UNDP, WMO, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Munich Reinsurance Company. They re-enforced the role of IDNDR as a catalyst of different initiatives on disaster reduction.

Other: A bilingual *card game* (English/French) on disaster prevention was developed in co-operation with the French Ministry of Environment and Land Use planning in the context of the Campaign and disseminated¹¹

- *Photo contest*

An IDNDR International photo contest was organised for the first time in 1998 on the theme of the Campaign. The international jury was composed of: the Director of the IDNDR Secretariat; a specialist in disaster reduction; a representative of OCHA/Geneva; a professional photographer.

The 1998 photo contest was divided in three categories of illustration: a natural disaster; prevention measures; the Campaign theme of the year. The contest received world-wide media coverage and had entries of more than 300 pictures. In addition to the IDNDR National Committees and focal points, some UN Information Centres gave significant publicity to the contest

Top awards went to two individuals from Bangladesh with photographs taken in their own country. One showed the 1998 floods (and can be seen on the cover of the 1997/98 IDNDR Annual Report) and the other a cyclone evacuation shelter during an exercise. The Geotechnical Engineering Office in Hong Kong also won a first prize for a photo entitled: "Now I know why the landslides occur".

The theme of the 1999 photo contest was the prevention of natural disasters. It was awarded to Mrs Armine Mikayelan President of "Women for Development", an NGO from Armenia. The picture illustrated a training project in seismic risk reduction for school children. The project was undertaken in the framework of the 1999 World Disaster Reduction Campaign "Prevention pays" and was also in the context of the 10th anniversary of the 1998 Spitak earthquake. More than 11,000 children from schools in Gyumri (former Leninakan,

¹¹ see annex XI

which was totally destroyed during the Spitak earthquake) and in the Shirak region participated in this project.

- ***Internet Conference***

An Internet Conference on “Natural Disaster Reduction and the Media”, took place in 1998 on the Internet using electronic mail and the World Wide Web pages. It followed the same pattern as the 1996 and 1997 IDNDR Internet Conferences on the themes of the Campaign.

The conference was organised jointly with Quipunet, a Peruvian Non-Governmental Organisation which promotes learning through the Internet. The IDNDR Secretariat helped to manage the international debate by: encouraging key players at all levels of society to contribute; ensuring that bilateral networking opportunities were available; and by structuring the debate in order to make it easy to participate. Experienced and respected disaster prevention professionals and commentators were recruited to provide the keynote papers and stimulate discussions. A moderator, Mr. Jon Ingleton of Natural Disaster Management (USA), monitored the debate

Issues related to communication and information, in the realm of disaster prevention were discussed through the web by journalists, disaster managers and public information specialists inside and outside the United Nations and from all over the world. CNN, Boneka Communications, The Guardian, Emergency Information Infrastructure Partnership (EIIP), Geo technical Engineering Office (GEO), US Federal Emergency Management Agency, Penn State University in USA, University of Cuyo in Argentina, University of Cape Town in South Africa in addition to UNESCO, WMO and other key partners actively contributed to the Internet conference.

- ***World Disaster Reduction Day***

In 1998 in Geneva and 1999 in Mexico City, the strategic plan was a programme of high profile public events which would create and maintain maximum momentum and visibility.

Preparation for the World Disaster Reduction Day included dissemination of promotion material (posters, press kits, video and radio programmes) and a press conference to launch the press kit and to release the programme of activities for the Day. Invitations were sent out to partners, UN representatives, diplomatic missions and the media. In addition, the message of the Secretary General was circulated by UN Resident Co-ordinators in their country of assignment and through a press release.

In 1998, the Day celebrations were marked for the first time by the presentation of the United Nations Sasakawa Disaster Prevention Award. The United Nations Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello rewarded Mr. Duo Ji Cai Rang, Minister of Civil Affairs of China and Professor Wang Ang-Sheng of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The ceremony also included the awarding of certificates of distinction and merit to institutions or individuals from Mexico, Armenia, Egypt, Australia, Nepal, Hungary, Jordan, Mongolia, Philippines.

The public event was coupled with a round-table on "Risk Partnership", chaired by Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, with the participation of eminent personalities.

During the ceremony, the prizes were presented for the 1998 International Photo Contest as well as to the Caribbean Artists for their contribution to disaster reduction, 'A Song for Montserrat'. The proceeds of the sale of this musical production of Caribbean singers, went towards a fund for the people in Montserrat hit by a volcanic eruption. This production, made by a New York-based producer who was present at the ceremony, was due to collaborate with the UNDP office in Trinidad and Tobago, sponsor of the initiative.

In 1999, the observance of the World Disaster Reduction Day took place on 13 October in Mexico City. Hosted by the United Nations and the Mexican Government, the international celebration was organised in conjunction with the Symposium on seismic risk reduction (the RADIUS Initiative) which was held in Tijuana from 11 to 14 October 1999 and with a week long event in Mexico devoted to the 1999 World Disaster Reduction Campaign on "Prevention Pays".

The ceremony included a speech by Mrs Rosario Green, Foreign Minister of Mexico, a message from the UN Secretary General delivered by Philippe L. Boullé, Director IDNDR Secretariat, the presentation of the UN Sasakawa Award with Mr Guandalini, UN Resident Co-ordinator in Mexico and a Round Table on Seismic Risk Reduction with the participation of 5 international experts. The IDNDR exhibit was displayed in the hall of the auditorium. The Mexican National Committee requested to keep it for its own use after the event.

4. Thematic, regional meetings and the Programme Forum

Proactive contacts were developed with the media in addition to the preparation and dissemination of press releases and other material on IDNDR activities and events. The organisation of press conferences/briefings was a major activity, the aim being a regular flow of information to encourage the media to report on disaster reduction activities in an accurate and responsible way. Substantive IDNDR activities such as early warning, seismic risk reduction and El Niño were given special attention.

International, national as well as local media were targeted. The major challenge was to attract the interest of the media in the activities of a non-operational organisation which up to that time had been perceived as "too technical."

a) Thematic meetings

- *Radius Initiative*

The project was launched with a press conference organised by the IDNDR Secretariat at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 12 March 1998. MM. Philippe Boullé and Mustapha Erdik addressed the representatives of the news agencies, newspapers and radios present. A

press release and background information on earthquakes and RADIUS Initiative was distributed. The website address of the project was disseminated.

During 1998 and 1999, media were regularly informed of the latest information about the project and were encouraged to consult the website and to interview the RADIUS manager.

The closing event of the RADIUS Initiative for Earthquake Safe Cities which place in Tijuana (Mexico) in October 1999 with the participation of 300 experts. The municipality of Tijuana and the civil protection were very much involved in the meeting and they publicised it to the local media (TV, radio, written press) who covered the event every day. A press officer detached by IDNDR from UNIC Mexico facilitated contacts between the media and the participants. Daily press releases were disseminated worldwide by UNIC Mexico to international media.

The outcome of the project was presented in Geneva on 26 November 1999 at a press conference attended and covered by major international media correspondents.

On 2 September 1999, after the Izmit earthquake of 17 August in Turkey, IDNDR in collaboration with the German Research Centre for Earth Sciences (GFZ) organised a press conference in Postdam (Germany). The objective was to provide the media with an insight on issues beyond the emergency relief, and to highlight the question of the necessity of urban seismic risk reduction raised by the disaster. Representatives of GFZ, Mr Boullé and a member of the IDNDR Scientific and Technical Committee from Turkey reported to journalists on the IDNDR seismic risk reduction programme in another Turkish city, Izmir, and on the German Earthquake Task Force.

- *El Niño*

The second consolidated press kit of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on El Niño, co-ordinated by the IDNDR Secretariat was distributed to the international press and all IDNDR partners in Geneva on 3rd June 1998 - The first press kit on the subject had been issued in late 1997 . It reviewed activities undertaken on El Niño issues since the beginning of the year, presented in a country by country format. The second press kit contributed to publicising the work of the Task force whose role is to act as a forum on co-operation through information exchange, policy formulation and the co-ordination of follow-up actions. Correspondents, particularly those from countries affected by El Niño, requested interviews with the Director of the IDNDR Secretariat.

The 1997-1998 El Niño event: "Evaluation and Projections", an international seminar which took place in Guayaquil, Ecuador, November 1998, was launched by a joint WMO/IDNDR press release. A freelance journalist working for international media such as International Herald Tribune was invited by IDNDR to produce and publish articles on the Seminar. This journalist has been very active in participating in the sessions, but no article so far has been published on the outcome of the meeting.

- *Early warning*

The International Conference on Early Warning Systems for the Reduction of Natural Disasters took place in Postdam (Germany) in September 1998. A press release was