

ISDR system and climate change

The ISDR system is composed of national authorities and platforms, intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations, the United Nations System, international financial institutions, and scientific and technical bodies and networks. The ISDR system is supported by the ISDR secretariat in Geneva and its regional units.

ISDR system partners are disseminating and applying relevant disaster reduction tools to support adaptation to climate change, as well as working with climate change policymakers to develop synergies between the Hyogo Framework and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, especially concerning national implementation.

As part of the ISDR system the **ISDR Working Group on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction** was established in May 2004 to share information and to advise the ISDR system and the broader disaster reduction community. The members of the Working Group include: OCHA, UNDP, UNEP, UNFCCC, UNU, World Bank/VARG, WHO, WMO, IFRC, ADPC, IGAD/ICPAC, ISET, SOPAC, and Tearfund. Care International, Christian Aid, IDS, Oxfam, ProVention Consortium and the Harbin Alliance collaborate with the Working Group.

For more information on climate change and disaster risk visit:
<http://www.unisdr.org/climate-change> or
<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/themes/climate/>



The screenshot shows the ISDR website interface. At the top, it says "International Strategy for Disaster Reduction". Below that, there are navigation links for "Home", "UNISDR Africa", "UNISDR Asia & Pacific", "UNISDR Latin America and the Caribbean", and "Early Warning Platform". A main heading reads "Risk reduction and: Climate change - Education - Early warning - Gender - Sustainable development". The central content area features a photo of people wading through floodwaters, with the caption "Uganda Flood emergency 2007. Photo by Peter Casier". To the right of the photo is a "NEWS" section with several bullet points: "UNFCCC 13th Conference of the Parties, 8-14 Dec 2007, Bali, Indonesia.", "After Climate Change and Disaster Risk, ISDR Recommendations for Action Now and Post-Hyogo.", "Risk related parallel meetings: 8-9 December: Development and Climate Days Parallel event at UNFCCC COP negotiations on Climate and Development.", "10-11 Dec 2007: Media training The Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) with UNISDR and UNEP will offer a workshop for journalists in Bali on climate change and disaster.", "Risk related side events: 04 Dec 2007: Columbia University Managing climate risks for adaptation and mitigation: new initiatives in SE Asia.", "04 Dec 2007: UNU Vulnerability, adaptation, resilience: cutting edge science for informed decisions.", "05 Dec 2007: WMO Improved decision making for climate adaptation: providing a science.", "07 Dec 2007: UNISDR adaptation post-2012: reducing vulnerability and risk.", "07 Dec 2007: CARE International Making adaptation funding mechanisms work for the most vulnerable." Below the news section, there is a text block: "Climate change is expected to increase the severity and frequency of weather-related natural hazards such as storms, high rainfalls, floods, droughts and heat-waves (IPCC Fourth Assessment Report). Coupled with sea level rise, this will lead to more disasters in future - unless prompt action is taken. Over the period 1995-2004, a total of 2,500 million people were affected by disasters, with losses of 890,000 dead and US\$ 570 billion costs. Most disasters (75%) are related to weather extremes (IPCC disaster statistics). Of particular concern is the fact that disasters have been increasing over recent decades, mainly owing to increased populations in hazard-prone locations, unplanned settlements and environmental degradation, but evidence is also mounting that climate change is a factor too, for example in more intense hurricanes, higher rainfall intensities and heat-waves." At the bottom, it says "Climate change is altering the face of disaster risk, not only through increased weather related risks and sea-level and temperature rise, but".



United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction



Climate change, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development

Climate change is altering the face of disaster risk, not only through increased weather-related risks and sea-level and temperature rise, but also through increases in societal vulnerabilities from stresses on water availability, agriculture and ecosystems. Disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation and adaptation share a common space of concern: reducing the vulnerability of communities and achieving sustainable development.

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Cover photo: Peter Casier

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"Scientists warn that more extreme weather is on its way, with rising sea levels and more intense storms and droughts ... risk reduction is our front-line defence against these threats."

United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon

Disaster risk and climate change

Climate change is expected to increase the severity and frequency of weather-related natural hazards such as storms, high rainfalls, floods, droughts and heat-waves (IPCC Fourth Assessment Report). Coupled with sea-level rise, this will lead to more disasters in future unless prompt action is taken.

Therefore, the ISDR system promotes the integration of climate change and disaster risk reduction agendas in order to assist governments and other parties to reduce climate-related vulnerabilities and risk through the following measures:

- ✓ Use the guidance of the **Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters**, agreed by 168 Governments in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan in 2005, to facilitate a comprehensive, system-wide risk-reducing approach to adaptation to climate change.
- ✓ Scale-up the use of existing **disaster risk reduction tools** that have proven to be effective in dealing with the weather-related events that will be exacerbated by climate change. These include vulnerability and risk assessments, early warning systems, land-use planning and building code regulation, and institutional and legal capacities.
- ✓ Ensure adaptation to climate change and disaster risk reduction are **integrated into development planning in all sectors**. Establish inter-ministerial committees and national platforms for risk reduction to ensure inter-sectorial, multi-stakeholder coordination.
- ✓ Improve **capacities and services for knowledge transfer from science to practice and application** to bridge gaps in risk management in climate-sensitive sectors.

How the Hyogo Framework can contribute to adaptation to climate change

Disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change share the same ultimate goal of reducing vulnerability to weather and climate hazards. Disaster risk reduction efforts are guided by the **Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters**, which calls on countries to integrate risk reduction measures and climate change adaptation through the following Priorities for Action:

1. **Good governance**, planning, budgeting and implementing policies to avoid settlement in hazardous areas and ensure that hospitals, schools, and transportation are hazard resistant.
2. **Understand the risks** we face and take action based on that knowledge. We need to use risk knowledge to develop effective early warning systems.
3. **Raise awareness** and educate young and old alike so they can reduce their own vulnerability. Many countries are taking such steps through the media and in schools.
4. **Changing practices** and conditions that aggravate risk, such as environmental degradation and poverty. Protecting precious ecosystems, such as coral reefs and mangrove forests, allows them to act as natural storm barriers. Effective insurance and micro-finance initiatives can help to transfer risks and provide additional resources.
5. **Prepare for the disasters** that will inevitably strike by having contingency plans in place and emergency funds established, as well as regularly conducting simulation exercises.

The growing disaster problem

Over the 1998-2007 period, 2,500 million people were affected by disasters, 723,000 killed and costs amounted to US\$ 843 billion. Most disasters are related to weather extremes. Of particular concern is the fact that disasters have been increasing over recent decades, mainly owing to increased populations in hazard-prone locations, unplanned settlements and environmental degradation, but evidence is also mounting that climate change is a factor too, for example in more intense hurricanes, higher rainfall intensities and heat-waves.



Photo: Pedrito Guzmán

Risk reduction recognised in the Bali Action Plan

At the thirteenth Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2007, Governments recognised the importance of risk reduction for adaptation. The Bali Action Plan, which will guide the negotiations for a climate change agreement from 2012, calls for enhanced action on adaptation, considering in particular:

- Risk management and risk reduction strategies, including risk sharing and transfer mechanisms such as insurance;
- Disaster reduction strategies and means to address loss and damage.

To support national actors to address the disaster risk reduction needs of the Bali Action Plan, ISDR system members will:

1. Promote collaboration between climate change bodies, focal points and experts and their disaster risk reduction counterparts;
2. Make disaster risk reduction information and tools more accessible for climate change adaptation;
3. Develop guidance on sector-specific risk reduction measures.