



General Assembly

Distr.
LIMITED
A/CONF.172/PC/L.2
8 March 1994

ORIGINAL . ENGLISH

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR
THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON
NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION
Yokohama, Japan 23-27 May 1994

OUTLINE OF A DRAFT FINAL DOCUMENT FOR
THE CONFERENCE CONTAINING PROPOSALS FOR
A PLAN OF ACTION

THE YOKOHAMA STRATEGY FOR A SAFER WORLD

Guidelines for (natural) disaster prevention
preparedness and mitigation

THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION

convened by the United Nations
at Yokohama, Japan, from 23 to 27 May 1994

(Short Preamble: The launching of IDNDR - res 44/236)

RECALLING the decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations to launch a far-reaching global undertaking for the '90's to save human lives and reduce the impact of natural disasters;

(res 46/182)

RECALLING the forward-looking decision of the General Assembly of 1991 to adopt an integrated approach for disaster management in all its aspects and interrelationships and, as such, to initiate a process towards a global culture of prevention;

RECOGNIZING the importance of the indications contained in Agenda 21 on the interrelationship of natural disasters, environmental degradation and sustainable development;

(res 48/188 and objectives of the Conference)

RESPONDING to the request of the General Assembly to:

- (a) review the accomplishments of the Decade at national, regional and international levels;
- (b) chart a programme of action for the future;
- (c) exchange information on the implementation of Decade programmes and policies;
- (d) increase awareness of the importance of disaster reduction policies;

**WE, PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON
NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION,**

at the time of reaching the mid-point of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, therefore, appeal to all vulnerable countries and communities to, finally, make a firm and formal commitment to save human lives, protect property and ensure progress and stability by transforming the International Framework of Action for the Decade into a concerted inter-sectoral program that will implement the Plan of Action as herewith laid down by the year 2000 and hence adopt the following principles, strategy and plan of action.

I. THE YOKOHAMA PRINCIPLES

(Executive Summary of the World Conference)

Explanatory Note

The informal preparatory process has shown that if the Yokohama Document is to reach both the political decision-makers and the private sector of society with an attractive and sellable message that creates interest and generates will for action, it should comprise a declaratory part and a well-defined set of recommendations and activities (plan of action); the Document could be used as a whole or each section separately. This section (I) will be the declaratory part and its text should be based on the following points.

I.A Affirmation of Principles

Explanatory Note

This Chapter should get the message across primarily to political decision-makers and the general public that the basic principles of IDNDR are as valid as ever, and that urgent, concerted action is required if the Decade's implementation is to succeed during its second half. Therefore, the principles must be restated in the light of the experience gained since 1989.

- the phenomena causing natural disasters are in most cases beyond human control. Society, therefore, must learn how to live with such risk, and, consequently, undertake actions towards prevention and reduction of such disasters;
- natural disasters continue to strike and appear to increase in magnitude and frequency;
- urgent action is required;
- disasters have contributed to social and political destabilisation, in particular because of the fragility of urban concentration;
- the development paradox:
 - in general, development is increasing vulnerability
 - yet, development can contribute to reducing vulnerability if planned and managed in an appropriate manner;
- scientific knowledge and technical know-how to reduce the impact of disasters are available;
- global social stability seems to have become more fragile and reduction of natural disasters would reduce this fragility;
- there is always a need to consider the entire disaster continuum (full cycle) with prevention as the ultimate objective;
- reaffirm the goals, objectives and targets of the IDNDR;
- protection of the population and the infrastructure is primarily a national responsibility;
- the community level represents considerable potential and often experience with regard to preventive action.

**I.B Assessment of the status of
disaster reduction mid-way into the Decade:**

Explanatory Note

The assessment should provide the readers of the "Declaration" with an overview of IDNDR results compared with the original recommendations, in order to lay the basis for a renewed strategic approach (comprising IDNDR) which will justify and enforce the specific plan of action contained in Part II.

- Limited awareness and in specialist circles only.
- The potential of the information media, industry and the private sector at large has not been mobilized.
- At the same time, more initiatives are taking place than expected, despite the above shortcomings.
- If these gains are not consolidated, there is a danger of declining commitment.
- These new efforts have not systematically been part of multilateral and bilateral policies.
- Marginalization of disaster reduction in the UN system and the international community.
- Insufficient acknowledgement of IDNDR potential as part of a global culture of prevention.
- The existing tools for improvements in disaster response, as part of a comprehensive approach towards disaster management, are not applied or even promoted. This contributes to insufficient awareness of the disaster reduction potential.
- Key actors of the UN have so far not lived up to recommendations and requirements.

I.C Strategy for the Year 2000 and beyond

Explanatory Note

The broad principles to be affirmed by the Conference in Chapter I.A, and the assessment of achievements and gaps during the first half of IDNDR call for a redefined strategy based on the reconfirmation of IDNDR objectives and an improved and accelerated approach. This strategy is the basis for the Plan of Action contained in Part II, and will be developed under the following headings.

- the development of a global culture of prevention;
- a policy of self-reliance in each vulnerable country and community with capacity-building and efficient use of resources;
- education and training in disaster prevention and mitigation;
- improvement of awareness in vulnerable communities, including a positive attitude of the media;
- generation of a participatory approach based on the potential and rights of individuals;
- improved risk assessment, broader monitoring and communication of forecasts and warnings;
- integrated policies for natural and technological hazard reduction;
- effective national legislation and administrative action;
- compilation and exchange of information on natural disasters;
- broader application of existing technology;
- integration of the private sector through promotion of business opportunities;
- strengthening the capacity of the UN system to assist in the reduction of natural disasters, including coordination and evaluation of activities through the IDNDR and other mechanisms.

II. Plan of Action

Explanatory Note

The Plan of Action will be presented as a series of concrete recommendations relating to the key points of the strategy (I.C). Each action recommended should take into consideration technical and resource-related feasibility and respond to a recognized requirement.

II. A Recommendations for Action

Explanatory Notes

The recommendations in Chapter II.A will be structured in a way to define generally accepted broad-based activities, required and implementable at all levels involved, starting from the community level towards global activities. This is to be endorsed by the World Conference with the aim of providing a basis for evaluating concrete improvements by the end of the Decade.

All recommendations grouped in relation to the levels mentioned below should answer the questions what should be done, why it should be done, how it should be done and when it should be done and by whom.

II.A.1 Activities at the community and local levels

II.A.2 Activities at the national level

II.A.3 Activities at the sub-regional level

II.A.4 Activities at the regional level

II.A.5 Activities at the international level, in particular through bilateral arrangements and multilateral co-operation

II.B. Proposals to the Conference

Explanatory Note

Chapter II.B should accommodate specific proposals from Delegations and other participants, of which the World Conference will take note and which it might propose for compilation in a global reference document.

III. Follow-up action

Explanatory Note

Proposals and requests with regard to immediate and longer-term procedural follow-up action, which will ensure that the Document obtains the necessary endorsement for full and effective implementation.

- Decision to transmit the outcome of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the General Assembly;
- request that the General Assembly consider adopting a resolution incorporating this outcome and an appeal to all countries to continue working towards the objective of a Safer World for the 21st Century;
- call on the United Nations to transmit the outcome of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction to all Governments, all bodies within the UN system, regional and other international organizations and groupings (i.e.: OAU, EU, OECD, Development Banks, CSCE, OAS, NATO, ASEAN, Gulf Cooperation Council, . . .);
- reaffirm the crucial importance of a substantial reduction in the loss of lives and in the physical damage caused by disasters by the year 2000 and of continuing the disaster reduction process beyond the end of this Century, as appropriate.