



---

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Sixty-fifth session  
23-29 April 2009  
Bangkok

**REVIEW OF ISSUES PERTINENT TO THE SUBSIDIARY STRUCTURE OF  
THE COMMISSION: DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

(Agenda item 2 (f))

**Draft report**

1. The Commission had before it document E/ESCAP/65/9 containing the report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its first session and document E/ESCAP/65/10, entitled “Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolution 64/2 on regional cooperation in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters in Asia and the Pacific”. The Commission also had before it two information notes relating to disaster risk reduction: the report of the Typhoon Committee (E/ESCAP/65/INF/2) and the report of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones (E/ESCAP/65/INF/3).

2. The Commission recognized that the Asia-Pacific region was the most disaster-prone region in the world and noted the importance of disaster risk reduction for achieving development goals in the region. Several delegations commended ESCAP for the establishment and successful convening of the first session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, including the organization of the High-level Round Table on Regional Cooperation for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Commission expressed general support for the findings and recommendations of the Committee and requested the secretariat to consider implementing the recommendations in the context of the current and future work programmes of the secretariat.

3. Some delegations recognized the important role of ESCAP in providing a regional cooperation platform for the sharing of experience, knowledge and information in disaster risk reduction, disaster management, and disaster relief and recovery, and facilitating the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action to enhance the capacity of the countries in disaster risk reduction. They supported the work of the secretariat in those areas.

4. Several delegations emphasized the importance of fulfilling the request made by the Committee for the secretariat to further enhance partnerships with the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and other United Nations entities, as well as with regional and subregional organizations (see

E/ESCAP/65/9, para. 4). One delegation informed the Commission of the development of the Global Flood Alert System by a centre under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and said that it would welcome the collaboration of the secretariat with the centre.

5. Another delegation also expressed interest in the establishment under the auspices of ESCAP of international cooperation among United Nations agencies and with other relevant bodies. The delegation also noted the important role of the United Nations Development Programme in that area as a major operational agency within the United Nations system. It reiterated its full support for cooperation among countries on the implementation of the outcomes of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction of 2005 and the Third Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction of 2008, and also expressed support for the cooperation of the secretariat with the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

6. The Commission noted the concern expressed by some delegations regarding the increasing threat of natural disasters such as flooding, landslides and sinking islands as a result of climate change in the Pacific, and the importance of capacity-building in preparedness and the development of policies and action plans for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. One delegation, on behalf of the Pacific subregion, noted the minimal recognition of the situation in the Pacific in the Committee's recommendations and requested the secretariat to assist in the expansion of activities and regional cooperative frameworks on disaster risk reduction, such as Sentinel Pacific.

7. One delegation emphasized the importance of discussing financial risk transfer mechanisms for dealing with the consequences of disasters, such as disaster insurance and the pooling of risks, and suggested that member States share their experiences and methods to find ways of increasing awareness in societies to attain a higher penetration ratio. It further suggested that those issues be addressed by the Commission in its future work.

8. One delegation expressed the view that the further work of the secretariat should be directed towards the creation of effective regional systems for disaster risk reduction which would be aligned with the global structure of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. The delegation also noted that, in its work, the secretariat should make use of existing regional and national mechanisms and capacities in the prevention of natural disasters.

9. The delegation of Japan informed the Commission that cooperation in disaster management would be implemented to support the efforts of the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in response to large-scale disasters. The cooperation included a new contribution of \$13 million for the ASEAN-Japan Integration Fund aimed at building a stockpile for mutual assistance relief within ASEAN, out of which approximately \$6 million would be used for the development of disaster information and telecommunications in ASEAN member States and capacity-building in the assessment and analysis of disasters for 300 trainees over the next five years.

10. The delegation of Thailand proposed using its emergency telephone number, 192, set up to coordinate concerned agencies and allow immediate response in affected areas, as a regional natural disaster alert number to raise awareness and reduce impacts of disasters in the region.

11. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Commission that the necessary executive measures for the establishment of an Asian and Pacific centre

for information, communications and space technology-enabled disaster management had been taken and that the Government was ready to host the centre and allocate the necessary resources for it to address natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, drought and typhoons.

12. The delegation of China expressed sincere appreciation for the assistance provided by the international community, including ESCAP member States, in the aftermath of the Wenchuan earthquake, and it expressed its appreciation for the visit of the Executive Secretary of ESCAP to the affected area following the catastrophic earthquake.

13. The Asian Disaster Preparedness Center supported the recommendation of the High-level Round Table on Regional Cooperation for Disaster Risk Reduction for the issuance of an Asia-Pacific disaster report (see E/ESCAP/65/9, annex I, para. 17) and the request of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction that proactive action be taken to establish the Asia-Pacific gateway on disaster risk reduction and development (see E/ESCAP/65/9, para. 9), and it pledged continued partnership with ESCAP, including for the implementation of those important and challenging projects.

14. The representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies also expressed the hope that, through the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, more joint efforts could be brought to bear to address the humanitarian consequences of disasters and the influences of climate change.