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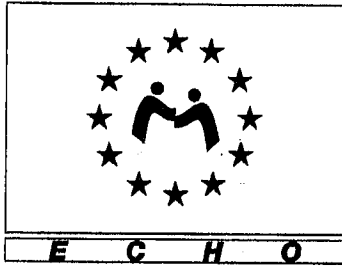
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REPORT OF  
THE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL  
COMMITTEES AND FOCAL POINTS  
FOR IDNDR IN THE EC,  
BRUSSELS, 27-28 SEPTEMBER 1993



1990 - 2000

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction 1990-2000 was launched by a United Nations General Assembly Resolution, adopted in December 1989, with the objective of reducing through national and international efforts, the loss of life, property damage, and economic disruptions caused by natural disasters, especially in developing countries.

In order to discuss individual and coordinated contributions of the EC countries to the objectives of the Decade, a meeting of the National Committees and Focal Points for the Decade in the countries of the European Community was convened in Brussels, September 27-28, 1993, with the support of ECHO, the European Community Humanitarian Office of the Commission of the E.C. The meeting firstly reviewed the different organizational structures existing in the member-states, whether National Committees or Focal Points for the Decade, which reflect the rich diversity of needs, resources and opportunities existing in the respective countries. Secondly, it considered the achievements attained towards the goals of the Decade. Thirdly, the meeting also provided the opportunity to be informed of the activities carried out by the Commission in disaster prevention, preparedness, and mitigation. The meeting agreed on the following conclusions:

- (1) A coordinated response of the EC countries is needed for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, which will be hosted by the Government of Japan in Yokohama, 23-27 May 1994. This conference will be a mid-term review of the Decade, and will serve as a platform for developing an action programme for the future.
- (2) As one of the major donor regions of the world, the member states of the Community may greatly contribute assistance to disaster prone developing countries to help them with their disaster reduction efforts. In this respect, opportunities offered for integrating disaster prevention and preparedness into plans for sustainable development should be fully exploited.
- (3) A promising area, in which the experience of the EC countries can be used, and a priority item for future collaboration, is that of the development of human resources for disaster reduction, and of institutional strengthening in developing countries.
- (4) An European IDNDR Working Group should be established to continue the dialogue initiated at the present meeting. It will assist to liaise the National Committees and Focal Points with the Commission, in collaboration with the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Decade and with the DHA-IDNDR Secretariat. The first and most urgent task of this Working Group will be to develop an agenda for the adequate representation of the EC National Committees in Yokohama, including outlining a strategy for the second half of the Decade that will be presented and discussed at the Conference.

This meeting constitutes a first step towards a more comprehensive collaboration for disaster reduction between the developing countries and the European Community.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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In the context of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), a meeting of the EC countries' National Committees and Focal Points for the Decade took place in Brussels, at the Headquarters of the Commission, on September 27-28, 1993.

This meeting was convened at the initiative of four members of the IDNDR Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) who, as nationals of countries of the EC, considered that the time has come to strengthen the links between the National Committees, as well as to exchange views on the present achievements of the Decade and explore the prospects for more joint or coordinated activities in the future.

Such a meeting should also help for preparing consistent country positions at the forthcoming World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction to be held in Yokohama in May 1994, both regarding a mid-term review of achievements and the charting of a programme for the second half of the Decade.

The Commission, and most specifically ECHO, the European Community Humanitarian Office, generously offered support and facilities to organize the meeting.

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## 2. AIMS AND FOCUS OF THE MEETING

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The meeting was conceived to advance the basic aims of the IDNDR within the European context. These aims were defined by the UN General Assembly Resolution 44/236 (22 December 1989) proclaiming the Decade, as of "reducing through concerted international action, especially in developing countries, the loss of life, property damage, and economic and social disruption caused by natural disasters ...".

The specific objectives of the meeting were:

- (1) to review the achievements attained towards the goals of the Decade in the countries of the EC;
- (2) to be informed on the activities carried out by the Commission in disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation;
- (3) to explore fields where activities could be undertaken jointly or in cooperation during the second half of the Decade.

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## 3. PARTICIPATION AND PROGRAMME

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Participation in the meeting was wide ranging, from varied sources, sectors and nationalities. This diversity was an asset enabling a large exchange of information and a constructive discussion. It included representatives from 10 national Committees and Focal Points in the countries of the EC, observers from the Federation of Russia (EMERCOM) and Switzerland, international and regional agencies (Council of Europe; NATO; Regional Office of the World Health Organization for Europe), technical cooperation agencies, non-governmental agencies; the private sector, research institutions as well as members of the relevant services of the Commission.

The list of participants is given in Annex 1.

The programme of the meeting was adopted (Annex 2).

Prof. Michel F. Lechat was designated as chairman, and Dr. Ian Davies as rapporteur.

Mr S. Gomez-Reino, Director of ECHO, sent a message of welcome that highlighted the particular interest of the Community in disaster reduction. In hosting this meeting, the Community is looking to establish a fruitful dialogue with the National Committees, that should lead to practical and tangible results. ECHO has a specific mandate to coordinate and develop Community disaster preparedness initiatives. The second half of the Decade provides a good chance in achieving the aims of IDNDR but for such success to materialize serious preparation is necessary.

The World Conference in Yokohama next year provides the opportunity to prepare for it. Europe is one of the major regions of the world and the Community is a major component of Europe, though not the only component. In its message, Mr Gomez-Reino emphasized the importance of a significant European input being made at the Yokohama Conference, which will be worth of its expertise, its experience, and its standing as one of the main humanitarian donors in the world. In addition, it should bring a contribution to specific disaster preparedness programme for the coming years, since a disaster management approach based on prevention and preparedness has been endorsed by the Council of Ministers as a major way to limit the effects of disasters. Having thus affirmed the attention given by the Community to disaster prevention and preparedness as an essential component of humanitarian activities, Mr Gomez-Reino announced that the Community is actively developing a series of initiatives to establish practical and cost-effective programmes in that direction extending over a number of years. He expressed the wish that the dialogue initiated at this meeting assist in the development and evaluation of these programmes.

Dr O. Elo, Director of IDNDR Secretariat, UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), reviewed the present status of the Decade and stressed the importance of the National Committees to achieve its targets. A regional approach for natural disaster reduction is actively encouraged by

the STC as a way to analyze common problems, identify gaps where action will be needed during the second half of the Decade, and define strategies. A good preparation of the World Conference in Yokohama will help to discuss issues on a global scale and design solutions. He emphasized the key role that European Countries are playing in the Decade in relation to research and assistance programmes within developing countries. He cited the extensive resources within European Countries, and expressed the hope that this timely initiative, made possible by the EC, would lead to additional collaborative initiatives in the various European Countries and the EC, with close links to the IDNDR Secretariat. The participants were reminded that the aims of the World Conference on National Disaster Reduction to be held next year are to:

- (1) review IDNDR accomplishments at national, regional, and international levels;
- (2) chart an action programme for the future;
- (3) exchange information on the implementation of IDNDR programmes and policies;
- (4) increase awareness of the importance of the progress of disaster reduction policies.

Dr Elo stressed the fact that the World Conference will be a political as well as a scientific event. Therefore it will provide a unique opportunity for high level officials to listen to reports on demonstration projects. It should also be a forum, or market place where science and technology for disaster risk reduction, as well as case studies of effective action, will be described to the potential users, namely decision makers and policy advisors.

## 4. NATIONAL COMMITTEES AND FOCAL POINTS

### 4.1. Types of national structure for IDNDR

Setting up national entities has been stated by the Secretary General of the United Nations as one of the means to promote and implement the goals of the Decade (Annex 3).

National Committees have been established in six countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom). Five countries have designated Focal Points for activities and procedures related to the Decade (Denmark, Greece, Luxembourg, Portugal, the Netherlands).

There is considerable variation between national committees regarding size, composition, and affiliation with official governmental structures.

The German National Committee for IDNDR was established by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but has now private status. It is served by two advisory boards, one scientific and the other operational.

In Belgium, there are similarly two subcommittees, each of them with considerable autonomy. One is integrated in the Royal Academy of Overseas Sciences and deals with scientific projects, the other, coordinated by the Ministry of Interior, is

multidisciplinary and includes all ministerial departments concerned as well as representation from outside administration. The two subcommittees have jointly organised a large information session on IDNDR at the occasion of the World Disaster Day.

In Italy, the National Committee depends jointly on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Civil Protection.

In Spain, the National Commission for Civil Protection has been designated as the National IDNDR Committee. It is formed by the representatives of the different ministerial departments which are related to Civil Protection matters, and also integrates representatives of the Autonomous Communities (regions) and one observer from the Federation of Provinces and Boroughs. It is assisted by a Technical Commission consisting of representatives of research organizations, universities, and administrative directorates having disaster - relevant responsibilities.

The French National Committee is interministerial and composed of representatives from various sectors within and outside the government, its secretariat being based at the Ministry of Environment and Major Hazards.

The UK National Committees has over the years evolved from a purely scientific committee formed by the Royal Society and the Royal Academy of Engineering (Science, Technology and Engineering Committee for IDNDR) into a UK National Coordination Committee with several working groups representing various disciplines. Focal Points reflect the same diversity than National Committees with respect to structure and affiliation. They may consist of an institution or ministerial department designated to handle IDNDR matters (the "Civil Protection Economic Community" in Greece, the Humanitarian Aid Section of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands), or be assigned to a high-level civil servant (Denmark, Luxembourg). In Portugal, the National Service of Civil Protection functions as focal point for the Decade.

In summary, some countries rely on Focal Points whilst others use Committees :

- Some committees have been active for the full years of the Decade whilst others are still being formed;
- Some are effectively a branch of Government whilst others are private bodies;
- Some are concerned with civil protection and

#### 4.2. Range of activities

The activities carried out by the National Committees and Focal Points reflect the same diversity as their structure and membership. Some Committee have been formed only recently. In addition, a number of reported activities predate the initiation of the Decade and the establishment of a National Committee or a Focal Point. A recurrent question is raised in the countries of Europe as elsewhere, that is to what extent disaster-related activities reported as contributions to the Decade would not have been carried out without the Decade. In this respect, it is possible that a change of focus from emergency response to prevention and preparedness constitutes a more significant achievement in the long term than specific projects.

emergency management whilst others have a focus on mitigation and preparedness;

- Membership vary widely, the private sector being irregularly represented, as well as the media. As well as these differences commonalities were revealed:
- Financial constraints appear to limit the work of most committees;
- Serious attempts are being made to bring together the scientific community and implementing agencies.

The large differences observed in the National Committees and Focal Points reflect the rich diversity of needs, resources, interests and opportunities existing in the concerned countries. This diversity may be a considerable asset and achieve an added value when activities are complementary to each others. Regarding public awareness, many countries are involved in education programmes to support preparedness planning. Celebration of the IDNDR Day (in October) is widespread. An elaborated educational programme with a package of video and written material has been developed in France. Innovative approaches include a self-tuition package in civil protection developed in cooperation with the EC, as well as the development of criteria by ECHO to build a priority index of countries who could particularly benefit from the input of risk-reduction measures.

There is however a considerable diversity of work in progress. The work can be broken down under the following headings:

- basic and applied research,
- public awareness programmes,
- risk assessment,
- preparedness planning,
- structural and non-structural mitigation,
- development planning with integrated mitigation,
- collaborative programmes.

Examples of this wide range are:

- consideration of safety factors relative to the cultural heritage being undertaken by the European University for Cultural Heritage, in



Ravello, Italy, under the sponsorship of the Council of Europe;

- a working group on medical and social aspects of risk reduction in the UK with a proposed project to develop post-disaster assessment teams that embrace medical, social and engineering skills to provide assessments of damage and needs;
- the development of legislation in France to improve land use planning and control of hazard prone areas;
- extensive scientific work in seismology and geophysics in Greece, as well as applied research in engineering seismology, earthquake engineering and architectural research.

### 4.3. Collaboration with developing countries

The thrust of the Decade is on reducing disasters in developing countries through concerted international action. Europe has a large pool of resources, expertise and experience. It is one of the main contributors of technical assistance to developing countries.

There is however at the moment no comprehensive up to date inventories of activities related to disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation being carried out in developing countries either by the European countries themselves or by the various services of the Commission. Lists of projects are available from some National Committees, but with a few notable exceptions these lists are incomplete or do not make the distinction between disaster prevention and preparedness, on one side, emergency response and humanitarian relief on the other. Programmes aiming at the protection of the environment, while admittedly often related to disaster reduction, are not clearly separated.

If an effective strategy for the second half of the Decade is to be successful, it is urgent and imperative that such inventories be established both for national and EC programmes and projects.

Most projects deal with specific preventive or mitigative interventions. Few of them are aiming at the development of local human resources in disaster prone countries.

Not all countries seem fully aware of the great potential of integrating disaster reduction into

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sustainable development. It appears to be little concertation between the EC countries regarding programmes and projects carried out in developing countries that could contribute to disaster reduction. An innovative approach is partnership between National Committees in Europe and in developing countries, as initiated by Germany with Kyrgyzstan, countries of the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia), and Nicaragua. Portugal and Spain have also expressed their interest in establishing closer links and exchange information with respectively Portuguese and Spanish speaking countries. This type of collaboration is likely to be most effective for promoting human resource development and strengthening the institutional and managerial capacity of disaster prone countries.

In some countries, such as Belgium, a number of projects directed at disaster prevention and preparedness are supported through contributions to international agencies of the UN (WMO, FAO, WHO). They are not identified as a contribution to the Decade as such.

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#### **4.4. Collaboration within the Community**

A number of collaborative projects are carried out between countries of the EC, either as individual initiatives or channeled through programmes of the EC or the Council of Europe.

In the case of seismic hazards, active cooperation between neighboring EC countries in the management of seismic hazards is well advanced. The Council of Europe coordinates a number of activities through the "Open Partial Agreement (OPA) on the prevention of, protection against and organisation of relief in major natural and technological disasters", of which are part a number of countries of EC as well as other European countries. These activities include the development of Regional Training Programme for Disaster Management, a Post-Earthquake Evaluation Programme, and several concerted actions presently being elaborated.

The OPA has helped promote such initiatives including the establishment of the European Seismological Centre (EMSC).

In addition, DHA (originally UNDRO) has promoted additional seismic networks on a trans-european basis for over a decade.

There is evidence of effective collaboration in the field of flood research. A recent attempt has been to compile a inventory of flood research activity across Europe. The aim of this study is to identify gaps in

national programmes, and transfer knowledge concerning flood measurement and evaluation programmes, such as early warning systems, and review all aspects of mitigation in EC countries. This work is still at an early stage. It is a model of the type of international overview that is needed for all hazards that affect EC countries.

More exchange of information is needed between EC countries, and between member countries and the Commission, regarding ongoing or proposed projects in disaster reduction. It should help initiate joint or coordinated activities, including research ones, in the second half of the Decade. National Committees, with the support of the Commission, should devise a way to link the initiatives which complement each others. It would be useful to develop a database concerning activities, resources, research, and projects carried out in the different countries.

As a concluding remark, it should be noted that several National Committees and still more Focal Points are benefiting from the support of, or even integrated into civil protection agencies in their countries. These agencies, whose experience generally predates the Decade, constitute a most efficient and robust network which can contribute greatly to the success of the Decade provided an open dialogue is maintained.

#### **4.5. National Committees and the Yokohama World Conference**

The World Conference on Natural Reduction, Yokohama, 1994, is intended to provide a forum for the National Committees and Focal Points of the Decade. Countries are requested to prepare national reports by the end of 1993 on their IDNDR-related activities, in particular their efforts to achieve targets for the Decade, and plans for the second half of the Decade. Salient points from these reports are to be summarized for presentation at the Conference.

One of the practical objectives of the meeting was to discuss the responses to the questionnaires sent by the IDNDR Secretariat in view of the Yokohama Conference. It turned out that this objective was somewhat premature, since only one National

Committee had prepared the draft of its response. All necessary explanations for filling up the questionnaires and establish the national reports were given to the participants by Ms Marise Köhn, of the IDNDR Secretariat. It is hoped that the meeting provided an incentive to the National Committees and Focal Points to fill up these questionnaires and prepare in time their national reports to the World Conference.

## 5. THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION

### 5.1. Activities of the Commission in disaster reduction

The Commission has not waited for the Decade to embark on many diverse activities directly or indirectly related to disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation. A number of Directorates General are involved (DGI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII, Task Force for Human Resources, and ECHO). No exhaustive inventory exists of these activities. One of the problems in developing a comprehensive inventory is that a number of activities are only disaster reduction components of larger development projects and consequently not easily

identifiable as such. However, in the context of its recently established Disaster Preparedness Interservice Group, the Commission has been able to identify a considerable list of activities with a direct relationship to disaster preparedness.

Several examples were given during the meeting of such activities carried out by different directorates (DGI, DGXI, DGXII) providing an excellent illustration of the range of interests and diversity of expertise to be found at the Commission.

### 5.2. Commission disaster preparedness policies in the context of IDNDR

The role of ECHO, the new European Community Humanitarian Office, was expressed in a Commission Discussion Document (Annex 4). This document provides a preliminary frame for further collaboration between the National Committees and the EC. The mandate of ECHO was spelled out, i.e.

"ECHO was set up by the Commission in 1992 in order to centralize in a single office the various different humanitarian aid operations of the Community ...

Included in (its) mandate ... was responsibility for the development and prevention policy ... ECHO's general responsibilities relate to situations outside the territory of the Community ... ECHO's role in respect of the other Commission agencies involved in this field is one of coordination ... It has also been given the task of improving the internal information flow on disaster preparedness activities, of ensuring a better degree of internal co-ordination, and of developing new areas of disaster preparedness activities in the humanitarian field ...".

As for the way to implement this mandate: "As a first step, ECHO is presently identifying and reviewing ongoing activities in the disaster preparedness field carried out by or on behalf of the

Commission services, including scientific programmes, training schemes, and projects forming part of development programmes ...

(It will also establish) a dialogue with Member States to obtain information concerning national disaster preparedness activities, whether carried out by government agencies, national NGO's, scientific institutions or private enterprises ... (as well) as with established international operators (involved in the Decade) ...

Finally, subject to budgetary provisions and agreement by EC authorities ... ECHO, in close cooperation with the other services concerned, has the intention of putting forward proposals for a new Community programme aimed at supplementing existing efforts in the field of disaster preparedness, (as a) specific Community contribution to the second half of IDNDR ...

(In this respect) ECHO believes that there is a useful role for the development of modest smaller scale disaster-preparedness projects where judicious seed-financing can achieve highly cost-effective results. ECHO considers that a percentage of the existing Community humanitarian aid budgets could in future be devoted to this type of disaster-preparedness activities".

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Given this framework for action, there is considerable room for strengthening the internal coordination between national committees and

setting up collaborative activities that will meet the targets of the Decade.

### **5.3. EC contribution to the World Conference, may 1994**

The Yokohama Conference will feature two special sessions (Main Committees) of half a day each, where regional reports will be presented. Regional in this context refers to UN recognized regional political, economic or development entities, as well as ad hoc groupings of National Committees which are undertaking joint disaster reduction projects. The objectives of the Regional Reports are: (1) to focus the participants' attention on the shared vulnerability to natural disasters that exists among countries of a region; (2) to present a case for regional cooperation between IDNDR national committees. These sessions should also serve as a platform to discover, explore and discuss joint regional activities to be possibly undertaken in the second half of the Decade.

The presentations will focus on activities, problems encountered and future perspective common to a group of countries. They may include case-studies of disaster reduction activities between several national committees. It has to be stressed that these sessions are not supposed to provide an additional forum to present inter-country activities of international agencies, scientific associations or non-governmental organizations.

The World Conference will also boast poster sessions and exhibits, where regional, as well as scientific/technological achievements, may be presented.

Posters sessions will be organized along the following themes:

- IDNDR international demonstration projects;
- Social and human sciences aspects;
- Health;
- Information Systems and Technologies;
- Earth sciences, Engineering and Architecture;
- Legislation, regulations and control-role of the administration;
- Education.

It should be mentioned again that the Conference is not one of science and technology, but one in which scientific and technical experts and practitioners provide information and advice to policy-makers from participating nations. It will be a platform for marketing science and technology, in particular European science and technology.

It would be advisable that, in addition to the national reports, the National Committees of the European countries should present a coordinated and united report to the Conference within the frame of the EC.

The main reason for the EC being present at Yokohama is likely at this stage to be to deliver a message of hope, to convincingly demonstrate that there is a room for improvement, and that Europe can play an important role in making - according to the Conference's motto - "A Safer World for the Twenty-First Century". If Yokohama would have as only result to render European Countries and EC aware of their potential and responsibilities towards the developing countries in this respect, it will already be a valuable result.

Active steps should therefore be taken in the coming months to define the format and content of the coordinated EC report.

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## 6. NATIONAL COMMITTEES IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE IDNDR

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### 6.1. National Committee or Focal Point?

As indicated, some countries rely on Focal Points whilst others use Committees. Should all the countries attempt to establish National Committees to devise and implement strategies for the second half of the Decade?

One of the countries, without a national committee, made a spirited defense of its approach, based on a Focal Point coordinating an effective network of Government departments and NGO's for distribution of IDNDR material. Another one, though having a highly structural Committee, expressed the idea that the importance of creating formal IDNDR Committees is overestimated.

In comparing the national presentations, it may be concluded that national committees allow for many combinations of expertise and concerns, reflecting the multifarious disaster-related interests in a country. Often, they have stemmed from initiatives by individuals or institutions, for example in Belgium, in United Kingdom, and more recently in the Netherlands where, concurrently with a Focal Point at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands Royal Academy of Sciences has established an IDNDR Committee which represents the interests of the Dutch scientific community in its contribution to the Decade. More interestingly, several of these committees has evolved with time, branching into subcommittees, burgeoning from scientific to operational or conversely, in one word developing their own dynamics. Their relatively loose bureaucratic structure and the capacity for adjusting to the changing needs and opportunities is an asset for future efficiency.

National Committees spread the message of IDNDR, facilitates interdisciplinary communication and build a culture of concern for improved safety in a way that is unlikely if an isolated focal point is the only national focus of IDNDR.

On the other hand, focal points being more narrowly focussed may at times better serve specific purposes. Generally attached to some institution or to a ministerial department, they are less hampered by those financial constraints that chronically affect most of the National Committees. Communications are faster and access to the political UN structure is easier. While it may happen that communications from the Decade Secretariat may require long delays to reach national committees, this would less often be the case with focal points.

Each country thus needs to develop its own appropriate structure for IDNDR. As stressed in the Report of the International ad hoc Group of Experts preparatory to IDNDR (Annex 3): "Each country will need to decide how best to structure and finance a national entity. Common to all, however, will be the pooling of resources and skills needed to develop successful integrated disaster reduction programmes."

More important that the type of structure is political commitment at the high level of government. The best structure will be the one allowing the optimal mobilization of the various interest groups and potential resources of the countries concerned towards the targets of the Decade. The structure may even change with time.

### 6.2. Gaps identified at national level

A number of gaps have however been identified whose correction should improve future activities. These gaps may be grouped as follow:

- (1) Lack of collaboration and coordination with country programmes

The most obvious gap would appear to be in the area of collaboration. Little collaboration is taking place between the IDNDR initiatives of EC countries. Collaboration could be greatly advanced without vast additional expenditure. The result could be to reduce duplication of

efforts and to share knowledge and experience. Perhaps more effective functional links between the STC and National Committees could improve the situation.

(2) Lack of focus on IDNDR designated projects

Whilst the IDNDR, through the STC, has provided extensive guidance to countries on the focus of priority areas, there was not a lot of evidence that countries are taking notice of such advice. Rather they appear to follow individual routes.

(3) Lack of attention to medical, social, economic, developmental and political dimensions of risk reduction.

Consideration of the health and social sciences as well as the political dimensions of mitigation was significantly absent from almost all the country presentations. The gap is both in research activity in these fields and in concrete project implementation. Similarly the focus of risk assessment is on 'hard science' (i.e. hazard assessment and the vulnerability of structures), rather than on the assessment of socio-economic vulnerability.

(4) Lack of a strong link between developmental programmes and risk reduction activities

There appeared to be a lack of applied research for risk management in development planning at regional and urban levels. In this field an integrated approach is vital that will consider both the impact of development activities in increasing risks as well as the incorporation of mitigation measures into development projects within hazard-prone areas.

There is a major lack of 'facilitating structures' that can stimulate the 'in-country capacity' to know how to secure projects, (i.e. identify their needs, formulate proposals, request assistance and manage effective risk reduction projects).

(5) Lack of attention to the private sector

Whilst certain countries had included representatives of the private sector in their committee structures, there was a general lack of emphasis on the role of business, commerce, insurance and consultancy in the promotion of IDNDR.

(6) Lack of resources for committee functioning, for assistance projects, and general lack of political support

As already noted there was a persistent thread running through virtually all the national presentations concerning the failure to attract adequate political support and consequent funding to enable even minimal levels of activity to survive.

(7) Lack of administrative mechanisms that address the multi-sectoral linkages of protective measures for diverse hazard categories

This problem arises from the complexity and all pervasive nature of disaster preparedness and mitigation activities and the sectoral, academic and professional divisions of this complex subject. For example in the development of warning systems, very useful knowledge can be transferred concerning the dissemination and implementation of actions concerning different types of hazards, such as impending flooding and wind storms.

Disaster preparedness was referred to as a bureaucratic nightmare. This pinpoints a critically important question, that is where to place protection and how to fit such multi-sectoral activity into stratified governmental planning? The gap of local institutions to create enhanced public awareness, train staff and run projects was repeatedly identified as a prerequisite for effective implementation.

### 6.3. Issues for the future. Facing dilemmas

In reviewing some of the gaps that were revealed during the seminar a number of options were highlighted. Issues were often finely poised between the merits of alternative courses of action, each with their strong advocates and each with inherent strengths and associated weaknesses.

These dilemmas may be summarized as follows:

#### COMMITTEES:

Whether to form a National Committee within Government, with assured funding support- VS establishing an independent National Committee with uncertain financial support?

#### FOCAL POINTS:

Whether to rely on a Focal-Point for IDNDR- VS establishing a national Committee?

#### COLLABORATION:

Whether to invest heavily in time, training and cash to secure effective collaboration and coordination- VS accepting the reality of uncoordinated actions, applying efforts to projects rather than building collaborative systems?

#### KNOWLEDGE:

Whether to devote resources to finding out what is happening within Europe, and setting up monitoring systems to maintain an up-to-date data base in the broad fields of research and application- VS applying all available resources to research and implementation?

#### STRATEGY:

Whether to seek the active support and funding from EC to develop a distinctive European strategy for preventive action in IDNDR- VS accepting the reality of ad-hoc approaches within each country?

#### HAZARDS:

Whether to focus on reducing risks from domestic hazards- VS concentrating on the needs of hazard-prone developing countries?

#### PRIORITIES:

Whether to devote further scarce resources to physical sciences, which are relatively well advanced- VS concentrating on seriously neglected social, health and economic sectors?

#### RESOURCES:

Whether to regard the new EC collaboration in IDNDR as a useful opportunity to mount a spirited and collective initiative on represented governments to devote substantial funds for risk reduction during the Decade- VS adopting a more passive role, accepting the inevitability of a low governmental commitment to the general cause of IDNDR.

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## 7. CONCLUSIONS

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Without reaching any final conclusions on these options, the meeting suggested a number of orientations for the second half of the Decade.

(1) There is a definite need to improve collaboration at all levels and within all sectors. The Commission, in its Discussion Document (appendix 4) has identified a number of practical steps that will certainly assist in securing effective collaborative working. Collaboration is needed in policy and administration, technical and scientific matters, and implementation of measures, between EC countries, between the Commission and member countries, between donor and recipient country partners in Europe, and in the developing world.

(2) Disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation are part and parcel of sustainable development. They should be integrated into development programs. While many projects incorporate protective measures, others may inadvertently increase risks. Therefore, policies should be developed and promoted to integrate mitigation into appropriate development projects, and vice-versa to adopt a developmental approach in all mitigation planning. This requires close cooperation between officials, researchers and practitioners working in the respective fields of development and disaster preparedness.

(3) Joint European projects should be encouraged. A number of Commission's sponsored and/or financed projects involving collaboration between European partners and counterparts in disaster-prone countries may serve as prototypes. In this respect, it would be useful to establish a data-base of current projects in research, applied sciences and transfer of technology, with the references of collaborating institutions and individuals. This would allow a full picture of what is taking place, in order that valuable linkages may occur and more concertation be

established regarding technical assistance projects carried out in developing countries that could contribute to disaster reduction.

(4) The gaps in research projects should be filled. The country presentations indicated a strong bias toward basic science. There was minimal evidence of work to support IDNDR in the fields of health and social sciences. It is to be noted that this situation is not unique to the European countries. This bias is at the moment one of the major complaint of the developing countries regarding the IDNDR world-wide research programme. European countries, with their expertise and experience, and through their many programmes of technical cooperation, are in excellent position to fill this gap.

Among the other research needs noted, two important gaps deserve mentioning, i.e. risk assessment in development planning, at regional and urban levels, and socio-economic vulnerability assessment together with the application of measures to reduce such risks in exposed communities. Studies on the social vulnerability to disaster in developing countries are particularly in demand.

(5) A specific need coming into sharp focus for the investment of resources is building or strengthening local institutions and developing training in hazard prone areas. One of the most useful avenues or perhaps, in the words of one of the participants, one of the least harmful thing we can do, is to build up on the capacity of people in developing countries. Caution should be exercised not to create dependency. It should be acknowledged that those countries have often their own effective way to cope at least partially with natural disasters. The seminar heard that progress in protecting communities would be much more effective if certain conditions could be met:



- political commitment needs to be assured;
- an effective strategy has to be developed between donor countries and recipient country and their local communities;
- funding has to be secured;
- local institutions needs to be in place;
- leadership and disaster management training has to be developed.

It was suggested that ECHO could play an essential role in promoting and supporting human resources development and institutional strengthening for disaster reduction in developing countries. The emphasis was laid on the importance of programmes reaching down to the community level, rather than restricting them to scientific and technological applications.

The resources and experience available in the EC countries could, if coordinated and linked with the support of the Commission, give a considerable added value to such an initiative. It requires careful identification of funds, resources and skills within the donor countries together with parallel identification of recipient countries partners for project formulation and implementation.

In this respect, and as a preliminary step, the Commission could enhance the collaboration between various European institutions involved in training for disaster management. It could seek to identify joint collaborative work, support new centres, promote joint activities, and develop a priority agenda.

- (6) The World Conference 1994 could serve a number of internal purposes within the EC, namely to assist in sharpening both the national and collective focus of disaster reduction in European countries, to attract more support from national governments, and to strengthen the work of the emerging network of IDNDR National Committees in Europe.

Nevertheless, the Conference should essentially be used as a platform to form partner relationship with disaster reduction agencies in developing countries and in developed countries. It provides an unique opportunity to outline for the developing countries what Europe may be able to

do for them to reduce their risks, in terms of prevention, preparedness, and mitigation. Leaders in these countries need to understand the donors' priorities, the resources available, and how to formulate projects that will secure donor funding support.

The National Committees should use their influence to convince the governments of their countries, and more particularly the agencies in charge of technical cooperation, to provide fellowships for attending the Conference to planners, scientists and relevant administrators from disaster-prone developing countries. They should constitute a significant part of the target audience in the Conference.

- (7) Finally, as the principal recommendation for immediate implementation, it was felt that an European IDNDR Working Group should be established to continue the dialogue initiated during the meeting. It will assist to liaise the National Committees and national Focal Points with the Commission, in collaboration with the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Decade and with the DHA-IDNDR Secretariat. The Working Group should assist in the development of an agenda for the adequate representation of the EC National Committees in Yokohama, including outlining a coherent strategy that will be presented and discussed at the Conference as a practical EC contribution to the second half of the Decade.

# ANNEX I

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## ANNEX 2

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### Agenda of the meeting

#### Topics for discussion

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### Meeting of the National Committees for IDNDR in the EC Brussels, 27 - 28 September 1993

#### Agenda

##### Day 1

- 10:00 - 10:10 Welcome  
*Commission*
- 10:10 - 10:20 Greetings, Presentation of IDNDR  
*O. ELO, Director,  
IDNDR Secretariat*
- 10:20 - 10:30 Introduction. The World  
Conference on Natural Disaster  
Reduction, 1994  
*M. F. LECHAT, Chairman,  
Preparatory Organizing  
Committee World Conference*
- 10:30 - 10:40 Guidelines for National Reports  
*M. KÖHN,  
IDNDR Secretariat*
- 11:00 - 12:30 Presentation of countries activities  
*National Committees /  
Focal Points*
- 13:30 - 15:30 Presentation of countries  
activities (cont.)  
*National Committees /  
Focal Points*
- 15:45 - 16:30 EC Activities for Disaster  
Prevention and Preparedness  
*Commission*
- 16:30 - 17:00 EC Policies and Procedures  
*Commission*

##### Day 2

- 09:30 - 10:30 Plans for the second half of the  
Decade  
*M. F. LECHAT*
- 10:30 - 11:00 Collaborative Scientific Projects  
*Ph. MASURE, Vice-President,  
French National Committee*
- 11:15 - 12:45 Identification of activities by  
sector  
*Discussion*
- 13:45 - 15:15 Identification of activities by  
sector (cont.)  
*Discussion*
- 15:30 - 16:20 Summary report of the discussion  
*I. DAVIS*
- 16:20 - 16:30 Closing remarks

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## Topics for discussion

(to be considered in view of the experience of the National Committees on the basis of the National Summary Reports)

(1) Please set the aims and focus of your National Committee

(These vary from country to country. Few countries will encompass the whole range of activities envisaged to reach the targets of IDNDR. Emphasis may depend on local needs, opportunities and resources, i.e. national hazards, local preparedness, scientific research, technical cooperation with developing countries, operational activities, etc....)

(2) Please describe the range of your current work relative to:

- a) your own domestic risk reduction activities
- b) your concern for risk reduction in developing countries

(This information could assist in the development of international research projects)

(3) Describe the scope of your work thus far:

Projects, meetings, publications, policies, training, research, etc. ...

(4) In what way do your activities link with assistance programs for sustainable development that are promoted by your country

(bilateral assistance, NGO's, private, EC, or UN)

(5) As you reflect on your activities as related to IDNDR, what are the facilitating factors, opportunities, obstacles, threats you meet to develop these activities

(exchange of experience may help in taking advantages of some situation or resolving common difficulties)

## ANNEX 3

### **"National entities", from the Report of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on IDNDR (doc.ECOSOC/A/44/322/add.I, 14 August 1989)**

100. A measure of success of the Decade will be the implementation within national borders of changed approaches to disaster mitigation, beginning with an integrated natural disaster management orientation and an increased focus on planning and preparedness. Governments will take national responsibility for implementation of programmes for natural disaster reduction, and meeting Decade goals will require the establishment of national entities that can bring together the full range of skills needed. These national entities may well differ in composition and functions in different countries but in general will promote the activities of the Decade, advise their Governments on priorities for the Decade, programmes, and projects most appropriate for their countries, and serve as points of contact with the international and regional elements of the Decade.

101. Each country will need to decide how best to structure and finance a national entity. Common to all, however, will be the pooling of resources and skills needed to develop successful integrated disaster reduction programmes, including planning, science and technology policy, research, public education and information dissemination. Links are needed with experts in a wide range of scientific, engineering and health disciplines as well as with investment banking, private and professional associations, voluntary agencies, the media, educational institutions and other entities whose actions can effect disasters reduction. Links with the donor community are also important to the success of national entities.

102. The national entity could be within or outside a national government. Committee members could include representatives of government, academic, research, and professional organizations and other interest groups. The latter could include the financial and insurance sectors and community voluntary and other non-governmental organizations experienced in dealing with populations at high-risk locations. Official representatives could come from agencies responsible for meteorology, seismology, emergency management, land-use planning, building regulations, health services, legal affairs, civil protection, public works and public utility policy. The national entity must be capable of interacting with the scientific and professional communities and with the public to promote and facilitate achievement of Decade goals. Government may wish to review the national entities already established.

103. The second essential element of a national entity is that it is linked to community level natural disaster mitigation efforts, the organizational structure of the Decade and regional institutions associated with the Decade. In this way, the national entity would establish a framework for activities for the Decade at the national and local levels and would link the regional and international organizations dealing with the Decade. It would also provide a mechanism for determining priorities and new programme initiatives, provide the means for mobilizing knowledge for natural disaster reduction and personnel training, and identify financial resources for supporting programme activities of the national entity and their regional and international extensions.

104. Whatever the organizational structure of these national entities, each should:

- (a) Develop a national plan for activities of the Decade;
- (b) Co-ordinate policy analysis, development and legislation regarding natural disaster reduction, monitoring, early warning and forecasting, evacuation planning, relief and rehabilitation;
- (c) Create and/or improve the awareness of the public and of governmental officials of the great loss of life, property and quality of life through natural disasters;
- (d) Develop logistic support and a legislative framework for effective disaster reduction measures;
- (e) Evaluate national programmes in terms of goals of the Decade;
- (f) Bring donors and benefactors together for concerted action to support the Decade and permanent activities thereafter;
- (g) Encourage preparedness through the development of localized quick-response self-help strategies;
- (h) Promote research, development and technology transfer to fill the gaps in knowledge related to natural disasters.

## ANNEX 4

### "EC Disaster Preparedness Policies in the Context of IDNDR"

#### Commission Discussion Document

September 27, 1993

#### Introduction

Disaster preparedness is a bureaucrat's nightmare. Everybody in the humanitarian aid community recognises the importance of the subject, but pinning it down, and fitting it nearly into a set of coherent policy programmes is quite another matter.

The problem lies partly in the wide-ranging scope of the subject. According to a useful Red Cross definition, disasters consist of any extreme events, whether of natural or human origin, which overwhelm vulnerable populations. Disaster preparedness means a readiness to prevent, predict, mitigate, respond to and cope with the effects of such disasters. This implies that the proper field of disaster preparedness activities can range from the purely scientific (for example seismic or volcano research), through the areas of engineering, environmental action, development and health programmes (e.g. building design, soil management) to the purely administrative (e.g. strengthening of national local administrative infrastructures in disaster-prone countries).

A consequence of this diversity is the fact that there are many different actors in the field, including for example universities and research institutes, charitable organisations and UN agencies, commercial firms and government departments. Even in the specific sector of government organizations there are many different operators involved, for example the ministries of foreign affairs, development, environment, defense, health, education, and of the interior. As far as the Community institutions are concerned, these functional and operational variations are by and large equally to be found in the internal organisation of the Commission. The only common theme linking all these different disciplines and actors is the humanitarian theme: the fact that the overall objective is to limit or reduce the impact of disasters on a given human population. This is where ECHO comes into the picture.

#### Role of ECHO

ECHO was set up by the Commission in 1992 precisely in order to centralize in a single office the various different humanitarian aid operations of the Community. It was felt

that the creation of a single service to handle all strands of EC humanitarian aid would help improve working arrangements and co-operation with Member States, with international humanitarian organisations and non-governmental organisations and with UN agencies. A centralized service would also facilitate mobilization of the necessary budgetary resources and allow the Community to play a more operational role in the field, where appropriate.

Included in the mandate given to ECHO by the Commission was responsibility for the development, co-ordination and articulation of Community disaster preparedness and prevention policy. Two points should be mentioned at this stage. Firstly, ECHO's general responsibilities relate to situations outside the territory of the Community. This applies equally in respect of disaster preparedness. Separate arrangements exist for disaster preparedness within the Community, where DG XI (Environment, Nuclear Security and Civil Protection) has the lead role, though naturally there is very close liaison between the two services. Secondly, it should be emphasized that ECHO's role in respect of the other Commission services involved in this field is one of co-ordination and not of domination. ECHO has been given the job of improving the internal information flow on disaster preparedness activities, of ensuring a better degree of internal co-ordination, and of developing new areas of disaster preparedness activities in the humanitarian field. But it in no way replaces the expertise of other services which have been making and will continue to make an input in this field, such as DG I (external affairs) - DG VIII (development) - DG XI (civil protection) - DG XII (science and research) - DG XIII (telecommunication, information systems and exploitation of research) and the Task Force for Human Resources (education and training).

#### How will ECHO carry out its role?

ECHO, as a newcomer in this field, is following a step-by-step approach:

- Step 1: Identification and review (by means of an inventory) of ongoing activities in the disaster-preparedness field carried out by or on behalf of the Commission Services (including scientific programmes, training schemes, projects forming



part of a development programme under the Lome convention, etc.)

An inter-service group has been set up to supervise this work and a standardised information system will be established to cover the various activities. It is the Commission's intention that this should be an permanent group which will ensure an ongoing dialogue between the principal services concerned in this field.

• Step 2:

Dialogue with Member States to obtain information concerning national disaster preparedness activities, whether carried out by Government agencies, national NGO's, scientific institutions or private enterprises. ECHO is pleased to be able to use the opportunity of the meeting of EC National IDNDR Committees here in Brussels, as an initial channel for this dialogue. The aim of the dialogue is not only to be mutually informed but also to see what strengths or weaknesses emerge from the current pictures, to identify patterns or trends that will be helpful in formulating future policy, and to explore areas where activities could be undertaken jointly or in co-ordination in the second half of the Decade.

One important aspect of this dialogue will be to discuss with member States how their practical expertise in disaster preparedness techniques or organisation, developed for domestic purposes, can be made available systematically for use in international disaster relief operations.

• Step 3:

In the coming months the Commission Services will also be seeking to develop a dialogue with established international operators who have relevant experience in this field, for example the International Federation of Red Cross, PAHO, UNDP, WFP, UNHCR, DHA. The objective will be to learn from the "best practices" of these organisations and to identify those priority areas or projects where intervention by the Community can be most useful and cost/effective.

• Step 4:

Finally subject to budgetary provisions and agreements by EC-authorities, in the course of 1994 ECHO, in close collaboration with the other services concerned, has the intention of putting forward proposals for a new Community programme aimed at supplementing existing efforts in the field of disaster preparedness. This programme will represent a specific community contribution to the second half of the IDNDR. It will be based on an assessment of the needs of the world's most disaster-prone countries using the different data-bases available for this purpose from institutions such as CRED, and will take into account the experience and expertise of established operators with existing well-proven

programmes.

Our provisional aim, which is at this stage still open for discussion and comment, would be to provide for a selection of the most disaster-prone countries in the world the following inputs:

- partial or entire financing of at least one down-to-earth, highly practical disaster-preparedness project targeted to help the most vulnerable sector of the local population;
- assistance, by means of finance or training, in the strengthening of the national or local administrative structures available for disaster management, in particular with the goal of ensuring that in each of these countries there is an adequately prepared focal point capable of inter-acting effectively and rapidly with the international aid community in the event of a disaster. This fits in with projects currently being developed by DHA, notably in respect of disaster assessment teams (UNDAC), on-site co-ordination (OSOCC) and the integration of military assets in relief operations (the MCDA project).

## Conclusion

Given the limitations of ECHO's budget and the ever-growing needs of post-catastrophe humanitarian relief operations, it would clearly be unrealistic to look for these new disaster-preparedness interventions in the field of large-scale, long-term prevention projects, involving for example major engineering or construction work. Such interventions fall within the scope of structural development programmes.

Nevertheless, ECHO believes there is a useful role for the development of more modest smaller scale disaster-preparedness projects where judicious seed-financing can achieve highly cost-effective results. ECHO considers that a percentage of the existing Community humanitarian aid budgets could in future be devoted to this type of disaster-preparedness projects.