



## International Strategy for Disaster Reduction - Stratégie internationale pour la prévention des catastrophes

# PRESS RELEASE

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### **Regional consultative meeting aims at reducing risk in Central Asia**

Natural disasters in Central Asia killed about 2,500 people and affected more than 5.5 millions over the past decade. Landslides killed 38 people in August 2003 in Kyrgyzstan. Droughts affected 1 million people in 2001 in Uzbekistan and the last earthquake in 2003 Kazakhstan affected 36 000 people.

Reducing disaster risks is an urgent task and enormous challenge in Central Asia. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are all prone to a variety of disasters triggered by natural hazards.

Governments of this region are particularly aware of the importance of reducing risk and vulnerability to natural hazards. They are gradually moving from a focus on mainly response to prioritising disaster mitigation and risk reduction, linking it to development issues, such as water resource management, environmental protection, land use planning, and poverty reduction.

The UN secretariat of International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) has opened an office in Dushanbe, Tajikistan with the support from the Government of Norway and hosted by UNDP. Its function is to raise public awareness; improve Governments' commitment to and promote their other stakeholders' engagement in disaster risk reduction; and share information and promote policy throughout Central Asia. UN/ISDR will provide support through activities such as promotional campaigns and opportunities for information sharing between countries in the field of disaster reduction.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence and UNDP Tajikistan, UN/ISDR will organize a first regional consultative meeting at the UN building-conference hall, 93, Anini Street, Dushanbe, Tajikistan on the 1-2 December 2005 on disaster risk reduction to achieve greater political commitment and identify priorities.

The majority of disasters caused by natural hazards often impact across national borders and have common sources. As such, they pose a threat to different parts of the region and therefore there is an increased interest in knowledge sharing, networking, developing common strategies and platforms that would result in strengthened national and local capacity on disaster prevention, which in turn would strengthen the social and economical development of the Central Asian Nations.

**For more information, please  
contact:**

**Tine Ramstad**

**Inter-agency secretariat of the International  
Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR)**