



External Evaluation of the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)

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The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

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Acronyms

ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
ADRC	Asian Disaster Reduction Center
ASG	Assistant Secretary-General
AU	African Union
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEPREDENAC	Coordinating Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America
DFID	Department for International Development
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESU	OCHA Evaluation and Studies Unit
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organisation
GA	General Assembly
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IATF/DR	Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction
IDNDR	International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction
IFI	International Finance Institution
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organisation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
SG	Secretary-General
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDMTP	UN Disaster Management Training Programme
UNDP-BCPR	UNDP Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery
UNEP	UN Environmental Programme
USG	Under-Secretary-General
WCDR	World Conference on Disaster Reduction
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation

1. Executive Summary

The Interagency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction¹ is a small organisation with a formidable set of tasks and responsibilities. The Yokohama Strategy and the Hyogo Framework for Action present a gargantuan challenge to the international community in putting the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) into place. This evaluation analyses how the Secretariat addresses its fundamental challenge of deciding where to apply its limited resources within this huge challenge. It considers the relevance of the Secretariat's work and the effectiveness of the chosen strategic priorities and work plan. In order to draw conclusions about what the Secretariat could and should aim to accomplish, the evaluation has strived to assume a pragmatic but forward-looking frame of reference.

The Secretariat has in many respects been effective in using awareness-raising and policy advice for supporting and sustaining concern for disaster risk reduction (DRR) objectives. It has maintained, and to some extent strengthened the momentum that was developed in the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). Due to its efforts, the DRR community in many countries has been able to increase awareness among key decision-makers about their responsibilities for disaster risk reduction. *Living with Risk* is widely respected as a benchmark for DRR internationally and the regional versions of *ISDR Informs* provide an important and useful source of exchange. The regional offices have been very effective in raising awareness, and their work is very highly valued by member states. They have strengthened links between policy advice and practice, which is essential for the credibility of the ISDR.

Despite a large quantity of initiatives, the Secretariat's performance has been uneven in acting as a 'clearinghouse' for a wide spectrum of DRR information and it has not established an appropriate communications strategy for fomenting broad political will and public commitment to DRR. Its concrete outputs or 'partnerships for application' have generated some quality publications and educational materials, but at the cost of raising unrealistic expectations for more direct material support to national processes and a blurring of the Secretariat's role as a non-operational 'honest broker' within the United Nations system. ISDR awareness-raising is insufficiently linked to the decision-making processes of other actors - national and international, public and private, and governmental and civil society - that must mobilise their own resources in order to move from awareness to action in implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. The Secretariat is known, and to a significant extent respected, among international DRR advocates, but its relations with mainstream development and humanitarian circles within and beyond the UN are weak. It has high ambitions concerning what mainstream development and humanitarian actors should do to implement the ISDR agenda. But to achieve its mandated outcomes its strategies need to reflect a deeper understanding of how development and humanitarian policies are formed and implemented.

The institutional architecture and array of stakeholders in which the Secretariat operates are diverse and accountabilities are multiple. By trying to please 'everyone' a vague profile has been created and programme continuity has been weak. Internal management needs to take a more steadfast approach to Secretariat priorities. The Secretariat cannot do this alone. Strengthened governance, leadership and support from higher levels of the UN are essential if the Secretariat is to present a sharper vision and thereby achieve its overall purpose of enhancing political will to move forward in risk reduction. More stable and predictable financing, with some allocation from the UN regular budget, will be necessary if the Secretariat is to act in a more strategic manner.

¹ Referred to in this report as the "Secretariat".

Considerable changes are needed in the Secretariat's governance structure to clarify accountabilities and to support the Secretariat in efforts to maintain strategic programme continuity. The current relationship with the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) is not satisfactory as a basis for leading either the Secretariat or the international community in choosing priorities in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action. Reform of the Secretariat is essential, but even then the IATF/DR should not become a governance structure that assigns tasks and defines the workplan of the Secretariat.

The evaluation concludes that the Secretariat has been dynamic in its efforts and has produced an impressive array of outputs. In order to achieve its mandated outcomes in terms of political will and public commitment for disaster risk reduction it will need to reconsider its priorities and better assess how to use its modest resources to impact on policy formation in development and humanitarian assistance. In the words of one interviewee, it needs to 'harness what's there' in its network and improve on its analyses of how to engage with the key development and humanitarian stakeholders. The primary areas for reform of the Secretariat are vision, realism, programmatic/financial continuity and structure. These need to be supported by a more stable, transparent and focused system of management, governance and accountability. In order to accomplish this, the following recommendations are made:

1. In order to move forward in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action the UN needs a secretariat for DRR, and should therefore continue to maintain an ISDR Secretariat, but with major revisions to the current structure and focus.
2. The Secretariat (together with a strengthened governance structure) should choose a narrow, clearly defined and realistic range of strategic tasks and priorities.
3. The Secretariat's strategic plan should provide added value to member states for policy analyses and communication/information support, based primarily on enhanced intra- and inter-regional networking.
4. In order to obtain a clear profile and use available resources effectively a major structural reform of the Secretariat is required at central and regional levels, focusing on two key functions, policy analysis and communication/information.
5. The Secretariat's internal structural reform process should be undertaken in conjunction with a reform of governance and a review of the role of higher level management in order to ensure that the Secretariat can be held accountable for its work and to enable the Secretariat to retain a more steadfast focus on its strategic plan and functions.

2. Introduction

2.1. The mandate of the Secretariat

An Inter-Agency Secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and IATF/DR were established in 2000 as the basic succession arrangements to follow up on disaster reduction activities of the United Nations after the conclusion of the IDNDR in 1999 (see GA resolution A/RES/54/219). As part of these arrangements, all assets of the Trust Fund for the IDNDR were transferred to a newly formed Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction.

The Secretariat reports through the Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Humanitarian Affairs to the Secretary-General (SG) who in turn informs the General Assembly (GA) on the implementation of the Strategy in his reports. Various GA resolutions make recommendations on the further implementation of the Strategy worldwide.

The Director of the Secretariat serves as the Secretary to the IATF/DR which is composed of UN entities, regional organisations, civil society organisations and the professional/private sectors. The IATF/DR has 27 members and Member States can participate as observers, upon request. The major function of the IATF/DR is to serve as the main forum within the United Nations system for devising strategies and policies for the reduction of risks from natural and technological hazards. This includes the provision of policy guidance to the ISDR Secretariat.

Funding for the Secretariat is extra-budgetary by mandate (stated in the founding resolution 54/219) and depends upon a small group of main donors with relatively short funding commitments. The Secretariat has maintained an annual budget of approximately four to six million dollars per year, excluding additional funds received for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) and the currently rapidly growing early warning activities.

2.2. The structure of the Secretariat

The Secretariat is primarily located within the UN Secretariat in Geneva and is headed by a Director (who also administers the Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction). The Director is supported by a Deputy, a personal assistant and an administration support team. Three senior officers are in charge of coordinating the main programming areas:

- Policy and Strategy
- Advocacy
- Information Management

The Geneva office has maintained a staffing level of between fifteen and twenty-five persons in recent years. The Secretariat has small regional offices in San Jose, Costa Rica; Nairobi, Kenya and in Dushanbe, Tajikistan each with a staff of one to three persons, which carry out regional activities in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and in Central Asia. A regional office for Asia/Pacific (Bangkok, Thailand) is in the process of establishment. In addition the Secretariat maintains an Early Warning Platform in Bonn, Germany, with three core staff to address this priority as called for by the General Assembly. Almost all Secretariat staff are on short-term contracts, a fact that has created uncertainty, insecurity and has made recruitment difficult.

3. Rationale for the evaluation

3.1. Selection of the evaluation team

In 2004, the USG for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Jan Egeland, commissioned an external evaluation of the Secretariat. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Evaluation and Studies Unit (ESU) was tasked to administer the evaluation process and selected a team of three independent consultants on the basis of a competitive bidding process. The team consists of Yasemin Aysan, Alexandra Galperin and Ian Christoplos (team leader).

Yasemin Aysan has been involved in disaster reduction issues for over twenty-five years. As part of her work with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) she has been an active participant in a number of inter-agency task forces and working groups related to the IDNDR and ISDR. She helped organise the Community Vulnerability session of IDNDR Yokohama Conference in 1995 and also supported the IFRC in preparing for the WCDR. She assisted in the development of the Disaster Risk Reduction Framework for the WCDR and co-facilitated an online conference to define the content and use of the Framework. Due to her previous engagements with the Secretariat and UNDP, she did not participate in interviews with these stakeholders in the course of this evaluation.

Alexandra Galperin has worked extensively with both evaluation and programming in risk reduction, primarily in transitional economies. She has an in-depth knowledge of the challenges of ensuring that policies and networking modalities are appropriately structured and implemented so as to prove relevant for public authorities and local organisations in the South and East. Her work has involved capacity building and the development of training materials and normative frameworks for disaster management at national and local levels.

Ian Christoplos has worked with a wide variety of initiatives to improve networking and exchange of knowledge in disaster management and related aspects of both development cooperation and humanitarian action. He is a research associate with the Overseas Development Institute and a researcher with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, and has also worked to create networking structures as former director of the Collegium for Development Studies at Uppsala University. He has performed numerous evaluations and consultancies related to disaster risk reduction. His own research focuses on analysing the institutional interfaces between risk and poverty alleviation and between natural disasters and complex political emergencies.

The team combines significant experience of undertaking monitoring and evaluation missions for various UN organisations, member states, donor organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). It has an in-depth understanding of the challenges in promoting and applying risk reduction strategies in various regions and countries of the world. In addition to DRR, the team has extensive experience in mainstream development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

3.2. Evaluation purpose

The overall objective of this external evaluation, as stated in the ToR² is:

To assess the effectiveness of the ISDR Secretariat in meeting its functions and responsibilities in line with its initial mandates, how these have evolved and presenting recommendations for the future role of the ISDR in light of the study's findings, other pertinent proposals, and the Hyogo Framework for Action.

The long-term goal of the Secretariat, as stated in the 2002-2005 logical framework is:

To facilitate increased capacity to manage disaster risk in vulnerable countries, supported by the international community, resulting in reduced losses due to natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters.

The purpose of the Secretariat, as stated in the 2002-2005 logical framework³ is:

To raise the political will and public commitment to invest in disaster risk reduction, based on a cross-sectoral and inter-disciplinary approach involving humanitarian and development actors at national, regional and international scale.

This implies that the primary concern of the evaluation is to assess the Secretariat's effectiveness in raising political will and public commitment among humanitarian and development actors in order to increase DRR capacity. To achieve its purpose the Secretariat must develop will and commitment among people who have limited awareness or weak interest in DRR. The evaluation team has thus deemed it necessary to look beyond the DRR community to consider whether this has been achieved. It has not been possible to survey the views of the ministries of finance, mainstream development agency perspectives, etc. As a proxy for this, the evaluation team has asked donor representatives, members of ISDR National Platforms and various actors on the fringe of the DRR community about their impressions of how well the Strategy and the Secretariat are known amongst their colleagues and whether there are indications that there is increased interest and will to invest in risk reduction, especially in light of the Indian Ocean tsunami and the WCDR.

It is presumed that the generation of political will and public commitment will lead to the overarching desired impact – the reduction of disaster risk. It is well beyond the scope of this evaluation to assess such impacts, but it would be overambitious to assume that the Secretariat could demonstrate impacts in such a short period of existence. Nonetheless, this does not rule out the need for assessing genuine outcomes. **The evaluation team defines the outcomes that the Secretariat aims for as being not just the insertion of DRR objectives in a range of policy documents, but also concrete evidence of efforts to act on such policy commitments by a variety of actors.** Such outcomes have regrettably not been monitored by the Secretariat, so the team acknowledges some difficulty in directly assessing this progress.

The evaluation team initially attempted to use the Logical Framework of the Secretariat as a template for assessment, but found this difficult in that it includes a mix of tasks that are to be implemented by the Secretariat itself and tasks that need to be carried out by a wide range of actors involved in promoting the Strategy, to which the Secretariat can only contribute. The

² See Annex 1 for Terms of Reference

³ This purpose has been rephrased in the current ISDR request for funding as follows: "The ISDR Secretariat is a catalyst to advance and facilitate the realisation of the ISDR worldwide, striving to mobilise commitment and resources for its wide implementation and for disaster risk reduction through partnerships at international, regional and national levels."

objectives are actually a mix of strategic objectives and Secretariat activities. The logical framework can be seen as an improvement over earlier strategic planning efforts, but it does not provide a basis for prioritising Secretariat roles within the overall DRR community or the Strategy. For this reason the evaluation is structured according to what the evaluators and their informants have judged to be key aspects of the Secretariat's work, rather than aligning findings according to the structure of the logical framework itself.

4. Methods

4.1. Evaluation focus

The following crosscutting questions have formed the focus of the evaluation:

- What is the relevance and viability of the ISDR Secretariat's work in view of its mandate and past performance;
- What conceptual and operational gaps have appeared in the mandate and structure of the ISDR in general and the Secretariat in particular vis-à-vis other key actors; and
- Should the ISDR Secretariat make adjustments to its structure, methods and priorities to adapt to current challenges, especially as defined in the Hyogo Framework for Action, and if so, how? Where are changes needed elsewhere in the UN system for the Secretariat to function effectively?

Key evaluation questions have been informed by the Strategy and Secretariat plans, and formulated *to assess the effectiveness of the ISDR Secretariat in the implementation of its functions and responsibilities*, which are formulated in the ToR as:

- To serve as the *focal point within the United Nations system for the coordination of strategies and programs for natural disaster reduction, and to ensure synergy between disaster reduction strategies and those in the socio-economic and humanitarian fields;*
- *To support the inter-agency task force for disaster reduction (IATF/DR) in the development of policies on natural disaster reduction;*
- *To promote a worldwide culture of reduction of the negative effects of natural hazards, through advocacy campaigns;*
- *To serve as an international information clearing house for the dissemination and exchange of information and knowledge on disaster reduction strategies; and*
- *To backstop the policy and advocacy activities of national committees for natural disaster reduction.*

As can be noted from the list above, the evaluation was not expected to focus on specific mandated activities such as early warning. In monetary terms this topic is currently very important to the Secretariat. Due to the visibility brought by the Indian Ocean tsunami some partners have commented on the Secretariat's role in this activity, which will be reflected where relevant. Implementation of ISDR supported early warning efforts in the Indian Ocean region has only just been started and it is thus too early to draw significant conclusions. It should be stressed, however, that the evaluation team feels that the overall findings of this evaluation with regard to the need for a narrower strategic focus concentrating on the potential added value of the organisation are presumably valid for these investments as well. The evaluation notes, with some concern, that early warning activities currently account for an overwhelming proportion of Secretariat funding, an imbalance that would clearly justify closer analysis in the relatively near future as the Secretariat's Bangkok office begins defining its role in the Asian region.

4.2. Methodological approach

The evaluation methodology has drawn on in-depth interviews with key actors regarding their perceptions of the quality and relevance of the work of the Secretariat. At the outset when planning this evaluation the team stressed the importance of gaining an understanding of the perceptions of representatives of member states and other actors who have not been part of the Secretariat's primary target group. In effect, it is this inductive focus on how the Secretariat is perceived 'from the ground' that provides the primary added value of this evaluation with respect to other wider reviews that are currently underway to reassess the role of the UN in DRR. The evaluation team has presented the perceptions of these stakeholders without judgement as to whether they are 'correct' or not. The strengths (and weaknesses) of a 'network of networks' such as the ISDR are inevitably manifested in the confidence and trust that different stakeholders place in one another. As such, it is essential to present data on prevailing perceptions of the Secretariat, even if these are inevitably coloured by geographical distance, past conflicts/collaboration and differing levels of contact with the Secretariat staff.

Interviews were semi-structured and both interviews and the email questionnaire were qualitative in nature. These methods were chosen due to the extreme diversity in types of activities and engagements in the ISDR networks, and in order to encourage respondents to extrapolate their views according to the varied nature of their relationships with the Secretariat. A number of key areas of convergence were encountered regarding the perceived relevance and added value of the Secretariat's work, even though there was little consensus on specific recommendations for the future. The qualitative methods used in the study and the diversity of respondents have meant that the evaluation team has chosen not to present quantitative analyses of replies as these would represent mere statistical artefacts. Both interviews and email questionnaire were confidential.

Review of documentation: The evaluation has drawn heavily on the extensive set of materials that the Secretariat has developed over the years and has also taken into consideration the findings of other reviews of DRR that have been made in recent years.⁴ Other reviews are underway, but were not available to the evaluation team at this point.⁵

In-depth interviews: The evaluation team has made 151 in-depth face-to-face and telephone interviews of selected persons representing a cross-section of key stakeholders. Choice of interviewees reflect geographical distribution, countries' disaster risk profile, balance of intense versus limited working relationships with the Secretariat, existence of a national platform, donor and non-donor member states, policy and technical staff, etc. Where practical, more than one person has been interviewed from each organisation or country. The vast majority of those interviewed were identified by the Secretariat, which may have biased nature of replies received. All interviewees conducted in Latin America and Africa were chosen by the Secretariat.

Focal group interviews were held in Nairobi and with UNDP- Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) in Geneva. The evaluation team took advantage of opportunities including important meetings, consultations and workshops to meet and interact with the technical and administrative staff from the member states in the regional offices of the Secretariat in Africa and Latin America.

Email survey: In order to solicit as broad a spectrum of feedback as possible, an email survey was conducted of selected ISDR stakeholders to complement the in-depth interviews. The

⁴ Most notable Kent 2004, Muller & Calvi-Parisetti 2004

⁵ Walker & Wisner 2005, Kapila

questionnaire was sent to approximately 1,300 individuals, selected by the Secretariat, a few of whom forwarded the questionnaire to their own networks. A two week period was allotted for responses, but replies were registered for two additional weeks. The level of response was poor, however. A total of forty eight responses were received, with a particularly low level of response from the South (apart from Latin America). Time constraints have not permitted follow-up to press for further responses. The responses that were received were almost all of excellent quality with extensive, well considered commentary.

Website and publication analysis: As one of the key tools of the Secretariat in performing its clearinghouse function, the team has looked closely at the website and publications. These were assessed in terms of structure, accessibility, scope and added value.

It should be stressed that the broad range of interviews conducted has demonstrated that, although there are areas of convergence, there is no overall consensus regarding the performance of the Secretariat or its future. Interviews have highlighted the conceptual and political diversity and divisions at all levels within the ‘DRR community’; between scientists and engineers, between NGOs and civil defence, between government and civil society, between UN and non-UN agencies, between humanitarian and development focused actors, and between different regions. Interviews have informed the evaluators in making their judgements, but no attempt is made to present recommendations that reflect a broad consensus on how stakeholders ‘in general’ think about the ISDR. **It should be acknowledged at the outset that there are no recommendations regarding the future of the Secretariat that will lead to universal satisfaction. This is a central finding, which should be taken into account when formulating management response.**

5. Evaluation findings

5.1. The ISDR Secretariat in context: Scale of the challenge

The Yokohama Strategy and the Hyogo Framework for Action present a gargantuan challenge to the international community. Several of those interviewed noted that the DRR community did not set priorities among these tasks at the WCDR, which has in turn made it difficult for the Secretariat to make its own choices. The prioritisation process was problematic with regard to the Yokohama Strategy and is likely to remain difficult with the Hyogo Framework. This evaluation analyses how the Secretariat addresses this fundamental challenge of deciding what to do with its limited resources. It considers the relevance of the Secretariat’s work in relation to these challenges and the effectiveness of the chosen strategic priorities and work plan.

The institutional architecture and array of stakeholders in which the Secretariat operates are diverse and accountabilities are multiple. In order to draw conclusions about what the Secretariat could and should aim to accomplish, it is important to assume a pragmatic but forward-looking frame of reference in assessing the relevance of the Secretariat’s responsiveness to the DRR community and efforts to engage with actors beyond those working directly with DRR. The Secretariat’s own self-assessment in 2003⁶ stressed that the organisation’s greatest need was that of (re)structuring and prioritising its tasks in an appropriate manner in order to enhance its quality and effectiveness. Interviews with staff and stakeholders that have a close working relationship with the Secretariat reveal that while there is a general feeling that progress is being made in

⁶ MacDonald 2003

maintaining priorities, it is as yet insufficient. Better plans are being made, but priorities still far exceed resources and capacities. An appropriate balance between quantity of outputs and quality of outcomes remains elusive. The Secretariat's leadership has applied a conscious strategy of embarking on new initiatives that will require stable, long-term funding even if commitments are only sufficient for a few months. In some cases this approach has been effective, as these 'pilot' efforts have demonstrated their usefulness and fundraising has enabled these initiatives to continue. It has also created uncertainties for staff and partners. The evaluation team experienced the effects of such uncertainties in its mission to Africa, where fears of an imminent closure of the regional office resulted in a highly defensive and sceptical atmosphere.

The Secretariat's planning approach has also frequently led to the assignment of relatively junior staff to tasks that require more senior personnel due to insufficient funding to manage programmes as intended. In this and other respects the Secretariat has tended to try to expand the quantity of its activities in order to demonstrate engagement over the full spectrum of its mandate. This has sometimes superseded consideration of how to ensure that the quality of engagement with policy-makers is maintained.

In the Secretariat's view, it is unstable and unpredictable access to funds that is at the core of its difficulties and which leaves it at the whim of individual donors. This has resulted in two observable trends. The first and most obvious is difficulties in maintaining continuity, structured approaches and a focus on what the Secretariat itself deems to be important and feasible tasks. The other is an apparent tendency to aim to produce visible and tangible products to display to donors that they 'get their money's worth', but with less attention to assessing whether these products reflect an appropriate way to use the Secretariat's limited resources to achieve the aims of the Yokohama Strategy and now the Hyogo Framework for Action.

In terms of defining the scale of the challenge, the seminal event for the Secretariat has undoubtedly been that of the WCDR. It has been at the core of the Secretariat's efforts to shepherd the international community toward a renewed and more forceful commitment to DRR. The evaluation team did not have an opportunity to attend the WCDR, so its information on the conference comes from different stakeholders. Furthermore, the WCDR occurred shortly after the Indian Ocean tsunami. In the view of many stakeholders, the WCDR was saved from near obscurity by the interest thus generated. It is therefore not possible to draw verifiable conclusions about how well the conference demonstrates the role and influence of the Secretariat.

There is broad agreement that the Secretariat established a very effective coordination structure for the WCDR which, together with its hosts in the Japanese government, did an exceptionally professional job of managing the conference. This notably included avoiding allowing the tsunami to overshadow the wider DRR agenda, and also maintaining a balance between providing openness to civil society and permitting high-level stakeholders an opportunity to agree upon the product that became the Hyogo Framework for Action.

The evaluation was conducted too soon after the WCDR to judge whether the Hyogo Framework for Action will result in genuinely renewed commitments and vastly expanded expenditure for DRR. The large majority of high-level stakeholders interviewed expressed doubts that a dramatic increase in support for DRR is likely. The outcomes of the WCDR in terms of future financial commitments to DRR will largely determine whether the Secretariat has judged well in its ambitious plans, or whether funding gaps will continue to plague its efforts to create a realistic and manageable agenda. **The evaluation team judges that the Secretariat would be well advised to be cautious in developing plans based on grand but vague international**

commitments to implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action until there are indications that fiscal appropriations are matching the commitments made in Kobe.

The Secretariat has, over the years, produced logical frameworks and other planning documents. The objective of these efforts has been to state what the Secretariat expects to accomplish and how. Within the Secretariat and among key stakeholders there is considerable agreement that more needs to be done to improve the quality of these planning exercises and in ensuring strategic continuity. Logical frameworks need to be more clearly related to resource commitments, and there needs to be greater attention to how activities/outputs are expected to lead to intended outcomes. The evaluation has found that in struggles to satisfy donors and requests from other stakeholders the Secretariat has not followed its own plans, with impact on its wider credibility. **A central question facing the Secretariat has been what has been done and could be done to limit the fragmentation stemming from gap filling and response to ad hoc requests. The evaluation concludes that insufficient progress has been made in this regard. Management, governance and financing reform are therefore essential in creating a more focused and effective Secretariat.**

Whether one judges the Secretariat to be effective or not depends on what ambition level is seen to be appropriate for a little organisation with a very big and increasingly complex mission. The DRR community is diverse and has come to encompass many new actors over the past decade, from the insurance industry to environmental activists. The range of policy-makers and political decision-makers that need to be influenced if DRR is to be mainstreamed in development and humanitarian policies and programming is even broader. The Secretariat has worked hard to expand its networking efforts accordingly. Strategic planning should provide a direction and accountability for the Secretariat in defining how to relate to a massive and amorphous set of potential tasks and relationships. **The Secretariat must closely manage roles, resources, relationships and expectations. In the view of the evaluation team, the scope for the Secretariat to effectively add value within its partnerships and networks relies on clear, realistic and visionary choice of priorities. The Secretariat has made efforts to do so, but thus far the results have not been sufficient.**

5.2. The Secretariat within the UN system

The Secretariat's difficulties are in many respects symptomatic of more systemic failures to clarify, highlight and implement commitments to DRR. A major reason that the Secretariat has had difficulties in deciding on an agenda and following it is that the UN as a whole has not sufficiently defined what it intends to do regarding DRR and how it intends to do it. This evaluation has been conducted amid a context of other recent and ongoing initiatives to redefine UN structures and goals in DRR, with significant implications for the ISDR Secretariat. Some informants have expressed concern, confusion and scepticism regarding how this evaluation fits into these other recent and parallel efforts. An important point to stress here is that many of those interviewed perceive these discussions as being primarily an 'internal' UN matter. International non-governmental organisations (INGOs) wish to maintain their independence and in most cases have limited contact with the ISDR in general and the Secretariat in particular. The International Finance Institutions (IFIs) also have relatively little contact, and have their own policy formation and planning processes that operate with little visible reference to the Strategy, the Secretariat or the UN. In relative terms, national actors frequently have greater contact with the ISDR, but they have little insight or interest in the internal restructuring processes within the UN. **It should be stressed, however, that virtually all of those interviewed were strongly supportive of a**

process that leads to retaining a relatively autonomous Secretariat, no matter how small, to represent the interests of member states, rather than a Secretariat that is integrated into another part of the UN.

These findings suggest that in the continued discussions of the future of DRR in the UN it would be appropriate to inject a greater degree of critical reflection on how this UN process actually relates to the wider DRR agenda. Outside of the UN, the various UN flags and logos are more often a source of confusion than contention. There is annoyance at the difficulties of understanding who does what. Whether intended or not, the Secretariat is generally viewed as part of this cantankerous ‘family’. **Many hope that one of its primary roles can be to reduce intra-UN competition, overlap and confusion, and bring greater clarity, simplicity and effectiveness to the UN support to the implementation of the Strategy. It should not raise yet another flag.**

5.3. Outcomes in influencing political will

Political will can be seen to consist of two stages. First is that of declaring support for a policy change. Second is implementing this change. The Secretariat has made some significant progress in the former, but evidence of the latter is still very limited. This challenge of moving from declarations to action has always been difficult in DRR, and these criticisms are not unique to the Secretariat. Nonetheless, an evaluation of a Secretariat for the ISDR must address the ultimate question of whether it has led to desired outcomes in influencing nation states as the primary implementers of the ISDR.

The Secretariat has been very effective in encouraging statements of commitment to DRR. The WCDR resulted in renewed and strengthened national political commitments to reducing disaster risks. The Secretariat’s efforts have contributed to the inclusion of references to DRR in, for example, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and other key documents. The Secretariat has made numerous efforts to identify entry points into poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) processes and is developing sets of indicators for implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. The evaluation has also noted some very positive examples of such influence at regional levels.

Apart from early warning there is not yet clear evidence that statements have led to significant realignment of national planning and fiscal priorities to match these commitments. Interviews revealed a widespread dissatisfaction among key stakeholders that key (financial) decision-makers are still not putting the ISDR into action. This is not due to lack of effort. The Secretariat’s logical framework lists an exhaustive and impressive range of meetings and conferences to be attended, primarily by the Secretariat leadership. Interviewees noted, and in many cases appreciated, the visibility of the Secretariat, and the ISDR. Some commented, however, that the message presented at these meetings was usually overly generic and not sufficiently tailored to the topic at hand. It is not self-evident that this broad meeting attendance is the best way to influence the mainstream political processes. **As mentioned earlier, there is an inevitable trade-off between quantity and quality of activities in a small organisation. It is therefore advisable that the Secretariat consider how to more appropriately concentrate its efforts to influence a limited number of key political forums. The Secretariat’s policy efforts should also be critically reviewed by experts in mainstream development and humanitarian policy processes to ensure that appropriate and realistic entry points into political decision making can be found.** The objective of these efforts should not be one of merely presenting the

Hyogo Framework for Action, but rather of better understanding what the ministries of finance, their colleagues in the IFIs and bilateral aid agencies - and above all their electorates - might be ready to listen to.

5.4. Perceived relevance

5.4.1. Stakeholder perceptions of the Secretariat's strategic choices

The relevance and effectiveness of the scope and structure of the Secretariat are perceived differently by different sets of stakeholders. These stakeholders can be categorised as follows:

- Local and national-level policy-makers and civil society advocates for DRR
- Regional organisations
- Donors
- NGOs and community organisations
- IFIs
- UN agencies
- Scientific and technical communities

5.4.2. Local and national-level policy-makers and civil society advocates for DRR

National level policy-makers and advocates for DRR are located far from Geneva, and this is reflected in their perceptions of the quality and importance of different parts of the Secretariat. Interviews reflected a generally quite positive view of the regional offices in Nairobi and San Jose. Northern actors clearly have more direct and regular contact with the Geneva office than Southern actors and also rely more on the internet for accessing materials and building ISDR-related networks. They also tend to be more critical of the work of the Secretariat, above all citing the unclear priorities and profile of the organisation. In the South there is perhaps less expectation that they could understand the mysterious ways of the UN.

There is very strong appreciation and ownership expressed for the regional publications that provide opportunities for South-South exchange and recognition for the work of the National Platforms and focal points. There is high-level and unanimous appreciation of the African regional office, especially for the work of the regional advisor, by member states, regional intergovernmental organisations and other partners. Before the creation of this office less than three years ago there was little knowledge of the ISDR in the region. Interviewees contrasted their accolades for the regional office with critique of other UN agencies in the region or in their countries. Having raised interest and understanding of DRR, there is frustration that little support has been mobilised from operational agencies and donors to move into more practical implementation. The main added value from the regional office is in advocacy, which helped to create a modest but genuine DRR community among regional/national officials in Africa. In a region where the primary disaster-related focus is on relief, this is regarded as a significant achievement in a short time. The regional advisor has been able to engage in high level dialogue at national levels, linking national focal points with the UN system and fostering specific partnerships for Africa.

Though on the whole quite positive, Latin American and Caribbean actors were not entirely satisfied with the work of the regional office. Some statements were received that the office primarily serves Central America and the Andean countries. The Latin America and Caribbean office is older and since its establishment a decade ago has benefited from more stable financing than the African office. Compared to Africa, the Latin America and Caribbean office has focused more on the dissemination of information and the development of public awareness and education

materials in collaboration with regional and national organisations. While the quality of these materials is usually seen to be quite good, there is frustration that sufficient resources are rarely available for launching widespread campaigns at the national/ local level.

5.4.3. Regional organisations

Collaboration with regional organisations has been generally seen to be effective. In Africa, these efforts have begun with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), where the regional office is credited with helping to mobilise strong commitments. This has been concretised in a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the African Union that lists five priority areas for implementation of the Hyogo Framework. In Latin America the regional office has long-standing collaboration with several regional organisations, such as the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO) and the Coordinating Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPRENAC). This is generally seen to be positive, but the evaluation team had some difficulty discerning the added value provided by the Secretariat in some projects.

In Asia, despite the lack of a regional office there are strong working relationships with the regional organisations such as the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) and the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), and UN entities such as the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), which on the whole value their relationship with the Secretariat. There are mixed feelings among the interviewed about the potential added value from an ISDR office in Asia. Unlike the regional organisations in Africa, which are not specialised in DRR, Asia has long-standing and wide ranging competencies in DRR. On the other hand, there is no regional inter-governmental DRR organisation that represents the countries of Asia, and regional entities have at times been seen to be in competition for recognition and influence. One interviewee summarised this point as the “UN is us and we are the UN, we can influence or question it, but not the others.” Given the increased proliferation of organisations operating in Asia since the tsunami, the role that can be played by an Asia-wide Secretariat function needs to be carefully thought out. It can be expected that the Asia regional office will (and should) develop into a different structure than those in Africa and Latin America.

5.4.4. Donors

Feedback from the majority of donors (and potential donors) to the Secretariat has shown a strong commitment to continued support for a UN ISDR Secretariat function, paired with strong concerns about the work of the Secretariat since its creation. The extent of the criticisms of the Secretariat ranges from minor to substantial. It should be stressed, however, that even the most critical donors clearly wish to provide continued and in some cases increased funding if they conclude that work of the Secretariat is improving. It was noted that this support was growing even before the tsunami.

Donor priorities vary greatly, but there is a broad desire that the Secretariat demonstrates its added value through the work of its national partners, rather than in its own products. That said, there is a demand for certain tools, including policy guidelines and in some cases indicators.

The Secretariat’s donors are concerned about what one referred to as a “nebulous” focus, vision and range of activities. Several stated that they have difficulties understanding what the priorities are, how they have been chosen and how well they have been implemented. There is a perceived lack of clear communication on most matters. The Secretariat’s presentations are seen to be unstructured and generally serve to confirm impressions of a fragmented and donor-driven agenda. Ironically, it is the donors who have been most critical of the Secretariat for acting in a donor-driven manner. There are major concerns among several key donors regarding governance

and management. It is felt that strengthening these structural aspects is essential as a first step toward breaking out of donor-driven approaches.

5.4.5. NGOs and community organisations

The Secretariat is proud of its collaboration with international NGOs, and the Secretariat is indeed seen to be very open and flexible as compared to other UN agencies. Interviews showed, however, that the NGOs do not generally perceive their relations with the Secretariat as being very close. Among European and international NGOs, the Secretariat is largely perceived of as an internal UN coordination unit, and therefore more of a bridge to the UN, rather than a ‘partner’ per se, with activities of direct relevance to their own work. At regional levels, NGOs have a significantly more positive view of the Secretariat as a partner. This involves seeing the Secretariat as an organisation that works with them to advocate for changes in government policies and in reforming inappropriate traditional disaster management structures.

The Secretariat’s support in arranging for the critical “Civil Society Statement” to be presented at the WCDR has been noted by some as a highly visible indication of commitment to open debate and pluralism.⁷ There are initial signs that a closer relationship may be emerging between the Secretariat and international NGOs after the WCDR, but it is too early to judge whether these follow-up discussions will develop into ‘partnerships’. Contacts via the WCDR have also resulted in some scepticism about UN engagement and commitment in support of a topic where innovation and impact is seen to emerge from local community organisations. One observer commented that: “Particularly in Asia, most critical innovations and implementation comes from NGOs. Not from the UN, and not because of ISDR. Most may not even know what the strategy is about. This enormous body of work is not recognised and captured. ISDR has not been successful in capturing and using this local experience.” In general, NGOs stress that actual progress in DRR is inevitably made incrementally at local levels and through small investments in changing the mindset of communities. The regional offices are seen to have made some useful investments in materials that contribute to this process, but some observers were sceptical of the ultimate impact of these products.

The evaluation team does not, based on these findings, suggest that the Secretariat attempt to engage at community levels. Rather, it is important to be aware that such concerns exist and search for ways to encourage National Platforms and other partners to establish networking environments where the importance of such experience is recognised and knowledge shared.

5.4.6. IFIs

The Secretariat has made considerable efforts to reach out to the IFIs. It recognises the importance of influencing the text of PRSPs and the content of their portfolios. However, the relationships between UN agencies and IFIs are rarely close, either within or beyond the realm of DRR, and the Secretariat’s links with IFIs is perhaps a typical example of the strains that commonly characterise UN-IFI cooperation. The IFIs (as with the international NGOs) generally perceive the Secretariat to be serving an internal UN agenda. The creation of ProVention is in some ways indicative of the fact that they did not feel strong ownership for UN-led DRR structures. This is not to say that ProVention duplicates the ISDR, but rather that it was designed to better address the needs and gaps identified by IFIs, private sector and NGOs.

One area where the Secretariat’s efforts are out of sync with those of the IFIs is the very limited attention that the Secretariat pays to the role of the private sector. This can be contrasted with the

⁷ Pelling 2005

praise that ProVention has received for its ability to engage with the private sector in a meaningful way.⁸ One interviewee mentioned the need for the Secretariat to engage with the World Bank “on World Bank terms,” meaning looking for ways to promote the DRR agenda without implicit assumptions that the state should be the primary actor putting into action and financing the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. Greater attention to the impact of privatisation of public services and changing public/private roles and responsibilities at national levels are also of importance in finding harmony among ISDR and IFI agendas.

Even some non-IFIs pointed out that integration of DRR into mainstream development is primarily dependent on the level of commitment that the IFIs show to this process. They note that ministries of finance are more likely to react to DRR issues within their ongoing negotiations with IFIs about major investments than they are to listen to the UN. The Secretariat’s engagement in this area has been focused on the production of guidelines for the Common Country Assessment (CCA)/UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes (as is appropriate in a UN organisation). The difficulties of influencing IFI-government negotiations through this entry point are by no means limited to the ISDR Secretariat or DRR, but are in many respects endemic to UN-IFI relationships in general.

Moreover, IFIs are the main funders of recovery and reconstruction after major disasters and as such are regarded in a far better position than the UN to influence national DRR agendas. The Secretariat is involved (together with UNDP-BCPR) in the creation of an International Recovery Platform, initiated by the Government of Japan, that could provide a basis for building such links. The evaluation team received mixed messages regarding the nature of this platform and stakeholder commitments, so it cannot judge the ultimate potential of this process.

It should be stressed here that the Secretariat views its lack of engagement with IFIs and the private sector as part of a division of labour and responsibilities vis-à-vis ProVention. No feedback was received to indicate that the Secretariat should duplicate ProVention roles by acting *on behalf of* the IFIs and private sector. Instead, there was a feeling that in order to achieve its objectives it must more forcefully represent the interests of the UN and member states vis-à-vis the IFIs. UN recovery investments, for example, are insignificant compared with those of the IFIs. The recent ProVention research into recovery had very weak coverage of DRR aspects. This would seem to be an example of where greater engagement on the part of the Secretariat would have provided clear added value. Also, when the International Recovery Platform was raised in the WCDR there was a sense of irritation among the IFIs that they had not been consulted in advance by the UN. Again, there is clearly a niche for the Secretariat in managing such links that does not overlap with that of ProVention.

5.4.7. UN agencies

Most of the UN agencies interviewed, especially UNDP-BCPR and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), are quite explicit that their work in DRR is entirely focused on implementing the Strategy. Especially with regard to intra-UN relationships, this reinforces the importance of differentiating between the Strategy, which belongs to all stakeholders, and the specific roles of the Secretariat itself. Semantic confusion between the Secretariat and the

⁸ See Beck 2005, indeed ProVention’s success may have given an impression that the Secretariat need not take on this role. It should be mentioned, however, that ProVention differs from the Secretariat in its limited links to national levels where many private firms are based. For example, National Platforms could be an important structure for applying lessons learnt in ProVention initiatives.

Strategy is a contributing factor to some of the confusions tensions between the Secretariat and other UN agencies.⁹

In general one can say that the Secretariat's relations are good with the smaller and specialised UN agencies, but considerably more problematic with others. Several UN agencies, especially at (Geneva and New York) headquarters levels, are concerned about the lack of clarity in mandates and relative roles among the Secretariat, UNDP and OCHA. In the words of one interviewee, the Secretariat and UNDP-BCPR are two overlapping "talking shops on risk reduction." OCHA has recently greatly expanded efforts to define a renewed and stronger role in natural disasters, Whereas this bodes well for a closer and more constructive relationship with the Secretariat in the future, at the time of the evaluation this process had not yet resulted in clarity in this relationship.

It should be stressed that numerous efforts have been mounted over the years to address weaknesses in joined-up approaches among the Secretariat, UNDP and OCHA. Major investments of time and effort are still being made, but despite the signing of MoUs with both the difficulties have not yet been solved at central levels. In the field, however, pragmatism reigns and these issues are seen as less problematic. Other UN agencies have expressed frustration that so much effort goes into addressing problems within this 'inner circle,' to the detriment of the more practical and effective initiatives that the Secretariat can develop elsewhere in the UN system. Other UN agencies generally report good relationships with the Secretariat staff, and commitment to proceed in developing closer cooperation, even though they also express some doubts about the outcomes of current Secretariat activities.

5.4.8. Scientific and technical communities

A limited range of representatives of the scientific and technical communities were interviewed in the course of the evaluation. Therefore the conclusions drawn here are tentative. Similar to the international NGOs, this community also does not feel fully integrated into the circle of main stakeholders. It is perceived that during the IDNDR their role was stronger than under the ISDR, both at national and international levels. This group raised strong concerns that the Secretariat was addressing a number of highly technical subjects in an amateur fashion. Concerns were expressed that indicators and conference presentations are being prepared which lack informed professional and expert inputs. This also applies to some topics discussed at UN conferences and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) where there is a feeling that the Secretariat staff should engage more closely with teams of experts, rather than speaking on every topic themselves. This is especially important where the Secretariat participates in technical fora, where it should provide a channel for engagement with its network rather than sending its own staff.

The evaluation team wishes to stress here that it does not share the view that more 'scientific' presentations are necessarily the most appropriate way to influence policy process. These are important stakeholders, however, and they retain significant influence over some National Platforms and networks. This suggests that efforts are warranted to see how to better retain the trust of these stakeholders and engage them in appropriate ways.

⁹ There is a lack of clarity in this regard. In many key documents (e.g., UNGA Proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007 A/59/6) refers to two main "organisations" involved in DRR, the "ISDR" and UNDP. When referring to the former no explicit mention is made of the Secretariat itself. In the Hyogo Framework itself, this evaluation is referred to as being an evaluation of the Strategy, without mention of the Secretariat.

5.4.9. Summary

Overall, stakeholders' perceptions can be divided into four general categories:

Proponents of a stronger Secretariat

A number of those interviewed stressed the importance and need for a significantly strengthened Secretariat. These proponents generally acknowledged that national level processes must lead DRR and the implementation of the Strategy, but that the Secretariat should be strengthened in order to (a) provide direct support to these processes, (b) supply information and awareness raising materials on an expanded scale, (c) demonstrate visibly that the weight of the UN system is behind the efforts of national level DRR advocates and/or (d) forcefully coordinate the work of the UN Country Teams to avoid duplication and confusion and promote integration of risk reduction in CCAs and UNDAF processes. Few were optimistic that these tasks could be mobilised in the short-term, but many stressed that the importance of the Strategy demanded a strong Secretariat.

Pragmatists

A significant proportion of those interviewed (most notably donors and other Geneva-based actors) did not expect that the Secretariat would be able to obtain significantly greater resources or be able to gain the greater intra-UN or political clout necessary for more forceful coordinating in the foreseeable future. They felt that plans should be based on a reallocation of existing resources and efforts to obtain greater effectiveness and impact.

This group clearly felt that the Secretariat's top priority should be to better define its niche. This was not seen as a mere communication issue, but relates to content as well. One respondent suggested adopting "a strategy that conserves the energies of their team in a way that gains access to the most crucial organisations, instead of being apparently everywhere and every time." Several called for the Secretariat to choose a limited number of themes or disaster-prone countries to work with at any given time, both to consolidate the energies of the office and to present a more comprehensible profile.

There are, however, differing views about what this niche should be. Some felt that the Secretariat has little to contribute to grassroots and educational efforts such as calendars and children's materials, as these are best designed, produced and disseminated within countries with the help of regional organisations (a view shared by the evaluation team). Others were more appreciative of these efforts as an expression of practical support. Some felt that efforts should focus on building bridges between the UN system and other DRR actors (as exemplified by the WCDR process). The Secretariat's lack of operational capacity was seen as an advantage in that it is relatively free of vested interests. Others felt that the key task was to help encourage greater coherence across the UN system by first and foremost ensuring that the priorities of the UN system itself at country/operational level better reflect the Strategy.

A clear area of agreement among the 'pragmatists' was the importance of the Secretariat maintaining a role of 'honest broker.' One interviewee referred to the Secretariat as "a small player bringing together the big players." These big players include the aid community and of course also governments. Another area of broad agreement has been the importance of helping DRR advocates to show to their governments that the topic is a priority for the UN and that the highest levels of the UN strongly support their efforts.

Sceptics

Although very few of those contacted stated directly that the Secretariat should be closed, some had a highly pessimistic view of its prospects for success. Some of those contacted were so sceptical of the Secretariat and its potential for improvement that they explicitly declined to take part in this evaluation as they saw it as an exercise in ‘rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic.’ There was a significant group that justified their scepticism on criticism of the Secretariat’s human resource and other management procedures.

Uninvolved, unaware and/or don’t care

It should be highlighted that the team encountered a number of key DRR actors who were unaware of the ISDR or who had virtually no contact with the Secretariat. For example, in one interview the director of a large-scale and very successful national risk and vulnerability assessment programme and his UN advisor in a highly disaster prone country reported that they had never heard of the ISDR. The poor response to the questionnaire could be interpreted as indicating that many key DRR actors perceive the ISDR and its Secretariat to be of marginal significance to their work. This has implications for any realistic strategy that strives to go beyond ‘preaching to the converted.’ Any approach that is implicitly focused on those who are already actively involved in a dialogue with the Secretariat runs the danger of continuing in what must be judged to be a relatively insular process.

5.5. Strategic relevance

5.5.1. Policy and advocacy

As mentioned above, given its size and resources, the Secretariat has participated in an extraordinary array of policy fora, the crowning achievement of which has been the WCDR. As exemplified by the WCDR, the Secretariat’s role in policy development can be described as primarily consisting of a convening function. It brings together those working in DRR policy formation and provides certain tools for them to use. The Secretariat’s own policy analyses are a point of departure for discussions within these fora. The ultimate development of policies is in the hands of its partners. The Secretariat has helped to increase access to data, which has supported local actors in arguing for specific policies. Some of the tools developed by the Secretariat have been effectively managed, such as creating a consensus on common terminology and in some of the conceptual frameworks that have been developed. Others have been contentious, such as indicators. A large proportion of the Secretariat’s policy support efforts have gone to servicing the working groups of the IATF/DR and a variety of ad hoc tasks, with mixed results. An important question facing the Secretariat policy and advocacy efforts is how to balance the need to service the IATF/DR, as a channel to the DRR community, versus the need to directly support its partners. **In the view of the evaluation team, the Secretariat’s emphasis should be placed on more direct efforts to reach key stakeholders, pending a restructuring of the IATF/DR.**

To support the policy formation processes underway in member states and among partners the Secretariat needs to be able to bring together three types of expertise: technical knowledge, communications and policy analysis. Each of these areas is a specialisation in itself. Its credibility as a convener of debate on how to implement the Strategy has suffered when staff and consultants with technical expertise have been assigned tasks outside of their areas of specialisation, e.g., dealing with mainstream development policy, and when communication efforts have been assigned to individuals with other types of experience. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, many of the policy and advocacy efforts among the stakeholders with which the Secretariat interacts are

unlikely to be effective if undertaken by junior staff. There is reason to question whether certain key activities should be undertaken at all if resources are not available (or higher level permission is not given) to engage human resources at an appropriate level. Interviewees have expressed concerns that staff and consultants do not always have appropriate levels of competence in these three core functions, for example:

- The Secretariat has only recently employed a senior communications officer and has not made a clear, long-term commitment to developing this function as an integral part of its work.
- With some notable exceptions, policy analyses have not been characterised by an ability to “speak truth to power”¹⁰ when dealing with mainstream development actors as they have instead focused on reiterating existing messages from the DRR community.
- Numerous stakeholders stressed that choice of consultants for technical analyses was frequently not appropriate for the tasks.

The quality of policy and advocacy efforts needs to be judged on two levels. The first is the question of whether the Secretariat has aided the DRR community. Despite some concerns, the Secretariat can generally be judged to have been effective in this. The second is whether the Secretariat, together with its colleagues in the DRR community have in turn been able to influence mainstream development and humanitarian policies. The evaluation team’s observations, discussions and review of documentation have led it to conclude that the Secretariat’s efforts in policy analysis, while extensive, have been insufficiently compelling to effectively foment political will for mainstreaming DRR.

5.5.2. Information and communication

The Yokohama Strategy, the Hyogo Framework for Action and various statements by the Secretary General and the IATF/DR stress the central importance of the Secretariat’s ‘clearinghouse function.’ Interviews and questionnaire responses indicate that most stakeholders either do not understand what is implied by the concept of ‘clearinghouse’ or differ in their interpretation of what it should be.¹¹ The Secretariat has developed clearinghouse functions via its website, publications and documentation roles, along with its rosters of stakeholders. As such, the clearinghouse function overlaps (as well it should) with advocacy. Much (but not all) of the Secretariat’s work does not involve the creation of new knowledge, but rather the ‘repackaging’ of pre-existing concepts and approaches. There is nothing wrong with this. The Secretariat need not ‘reinvent the wheel.’ The important question is whether this ‘repackaging,’ has provided added value over the earlier or existing packages, whether it has provided a basis for more effective information and communication efforts, and if it has provided a better basis for relating to the current international development and humanitarian policy discourse.

For many stakeholders the Secretariat is primarily seen as a producer of information and educational materials and a clearinghouse for data and information on UN DRR activities. As with other aspects of the Secretariat’s work, the quantity of reports, publications and website-based information is impressive. The evaluation team uncovered a great thirst for information and education materials, and found that the Secretariat has done much to build its relationships with regional and national actors by partially satiating this thirst. The evaluation team is concerned that the relationships and expectations thus created do not reflect an appropriate and sustainable role

¹⁰ This is a term coined by Aaron Wildavsky, one of the founders of the science of policy analysis to refer to the importance of being able to relate to the frames of reference of key decision-makers.

¹¹ The Secretariat’s logical framework defines information clearinghouse as “an information resource facility that actively collects, receives, analyzes/synthesizes and produces information products and make them available to a broad audience.”

for the Secretariat. There is undoubtedly a huge need for information on DRR throughout the world, but it is not self-evident that these needs could or should be met to a significant degree by the Secretariat. It would perhaps be more appropriate to demonstrate the Secretariat's support function by a far more limited role in bringing technical specialists together with those national authorities, regional organisations and information users that must ultimately bear the costs of these activities. The Secretariat has produced some notable good examples of spin-off effects where other actors have taken over its information activities, but has also in a number of cases created unrealistic expectations about its role in supporting national dissemination efforts.

The Secretariat has engaged support from short-term consultants for developing plans and visions for what one consultant referred to as a "World Disaster Risk Reduction Center."¹² The proposed centre would require six qualified staff. The Secretariat currently has two. One of the consultations acknowledged that the Secretariat is at this time not, in fact, a clearinghouse. "To develop a 'Clearing house' (sic) a classical consultancy is not enough. Someone has to specify such an application together with representatives from the target audience and the internal staff. This needs time and should be embedded in the organization as close as possible."¹³ The consultancies have helped the Secretariat to map a broad array of hypothetical target audiences, and if the Secretariat had the resources to act on the recommendations it has received it would have an appropriate basis for moving forward. Strategic planning of these activities, however, suffers from a tendency to retain aims that are far beyond what can be achieved with available means. Listing *who* the audiences might be is just a first step. Establishment of a genuine clearinghouse function would require far more extensive investigation into the *needs* and *desires* of the potential audience,¹⁴ combined with a realistic and focused analysis of mid- to long-term financial implications of such an investment. It would be inappropriate to attempt to create a "World Disaster Risk Reduction Center" without very substantial and long-term funding commitments.

The ISDR website is considerably improved over the structure used in the past, and contains an impressive array of information. It has some significant shortcomings as well. The project orientation of the Secretariat's information functions is reflected in its publications and website content. Some publications are of excellent quality, some less so, but a review of the ISDR website leaves the reader with an impression of a myriad of different publications and report series in different formats for different audiences. The draw-down menus may include anything from a magazine to a one-off report to an invitation to a past workshop. Some seemingly central pages are blank (one of the "DR and sustainable development" windows). In some instances it is impossible to see if more than one issue of a given publication series has been produced since only one issue is posted. The information on the library provides extensive information on how to search the catalogue, but the search function is not available yet. The website is not unique in these deficiencies. There are many agencies with similar gaps in continuity and maintenance. It is merely a typical example of a site that was designed to be far more ambitious than could realistically be maintained.

If a decision is made to make a greater commitment to creating a clearinghouse for DRR information there would need to be consideration of how many web portals and gateways are losing their audience when most people just 'google' when they search for information. This is

¹² Butler 2003

¹³ Biblioconsult Kiser 2004:9

¹⁴ Several of those interviewed mentioned that they did not really need a 'clearinghouse' function at all, since the DRR communities in their regions did not actively use the Internet and/or since there are many other well developed websites offering information on DRR.

especially important for those in the humanitarian and development fields who are not even aware that they are looking for ‘DRR’ information. Major attention to this is required if the Secretariat is to provide DRR information to those who are not disaster reduction specialists.

Efforts to create a clearinghouse in some respects exemplify many of the Secretariat’s other attempts to create sustainable, broad-based and comprehensive service functions with very small, short-term funding commitments. Goals are set without sufficient and pragmatic reference to the scale and stability of resource flows. A more modest and manageable focus could be to provide just a clearinghouse (in this sense a depository) for materials connected with UN DDR relevant programmes, activities and resolutions, information related to National Platforms and country profiles. This is what some stakeholders reported that they primarily use the website for. This could be complemented by a comprehensive set of links to non-UN DRR related websites for those in need of further data.

5.6. Institutional relevance

5.6.1. The Secretariat and the UN system

Interviews with stakeholders revealed two basic perceptions on the added value of the Secretariat’s work. Some stressed the wide gaps that are being at least partially filled, such as the need for information materials and coordination among UN agencies. The Secretariat is seen to be addressing valid needs, even if they can only address a small proportion of those needs. There are many strong advocacy networks within the DRR community around specific technical issues, and these have frequently been able to take advantage of Secretariat support to link UN backing to their efforts to influence higher political levels, to discover where they can find relevant international experience and expertise, and to generally increase their confidence that they are ‘not alone’ in promoting a topic that is almost always low on their own respective national political agendas.

Others felt that there are already too many ‘talking shops’ and UN flags and logos in DRR. Concerns were expressed that rather than coordinating (i.e., ensuring that there were *less* flags and logos) there are some occasions where the Secretariat has led to further duplication. In general, the Secretariat is seen as providing added value in specific areas to much of the UN system, but the relationship with UNDP is at times counterproductive and the relationship with OCHA is not yet clear. **These internal UN problems are seen to distract the Secretariat from more important tasks. The National Platforms are clearly important to the member states that are engaged with them. At times, however, they have proven to be a particular point of contention due to uncertainties about where the Secretariat’s networking functions may complement, duplicate or conflict with those of other UN agencies.**

5.6.2. National platforms and relations with member states

A number of those interviewed stressed that they saw support to National Platforms as the most important task of the Secretariat. Others expressed concern about increasing Secretariat involvement at national level, since it was seen to be beyond their mandate and capacities and in some cases interfered with the responsibilities of national actors. In manoeuvring between these different pressures, the Secretariat is seen to have demonstrated a degree of indecisiveness about its own commitment regarding support to platforms and networks at national levels. Draft “guiding principles” have been presented.¹⁵ These principles are very broad since it is felt

¹⁵ Guiding Principles: National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction, ISDR (no date)

(accurately in the view of the evaluation team) that there is no template that would be appropriate for promoting the variety of institutional arrangements that are driving DRR around the world. The historical roles of the state, civil society, the private sector and academia in DRR vary enormously from country to country. Furthermore, the diversity of institutions that have already been established under the label of 'National Platform' means that a more specific definition of the concept would inevitably dispute the legitimacy of already recognised National Platforms. Given that the Secretariat has very limited capacity to intervene even if it were to determine that an inappropriate process was underway in a specific country, it has wisely chosen to avoid a prescriptive role regarding platform development.

In the past, National Platforms were not actively encouraged or supported by the Secretariat, apart from the efforts of individual staff. This can be attributed to several factors:

- A widely (but not universally) held view that the IDNDR National Committees were problematic, and that they were likely to reinvent themselves as National Platforms;
- an awareness that the concept of pluralistic National Platforms has worked very well in the North, and has generally not created conflicts with governmental structures, but that these 'models' are not necessarily replicable in the South and East;
- uncertainties regarding how National Platforms should differ from the national structures with which various UN and non-UN agencies interact and build capacities, creating potential conflicts and confusion;
- a fear of being seen to instigate complex political processes, over which the Secretariat would have little influence; and
- lack of resources to visit, monitor, advise and encourage stakeholders in the creation of National Platforms.

These are all valid reasons for hesitancy, but the Secretariat's past caution has led to a significant frustration. Pressures are increasing for more support for National Platforms. Some donors have explicitly stated that their levels of commitment are based on expectations of outcomes in terms of stronger national platforms and institutions. Many of those interviewed stressed that it is the national-level actors that are the implementers of the Strategy, and that the Secretariat needs to more clearly abide by its supportive role vis-à-vis national processes. Despite a growing Secretariat commitment to developing National Platforms, the level of human resource and financial investment remains disproportionate to the scale of the task. The disparity between means and aims makes it difficult to assess what the Secretariat really intends to accomplish.

A clearer vision and manageable expectations are essential if the Secretariat is to retain credibility among national partners and donors. National partners need to know more specifically what they can expect from the Secretariat. Frankness and realism should characterise Secretariat roles vis-à-vis National Platforms. Part of this should be to further emphasise that the process of creating National Platforms will always be a national process. The Secretariat can backstop and support a variety of formal and informal groupings of national level advocates of DRR, some of which may eventually become National Platforms when approved by their respective governments.

A precondition for a clearer stance on National Platforms must be a transparent and firm agreement among the UN agencies about the relationship between these platforms and other DRR groupings supported by other UN agencies, especially UNDP. Regional and national offices have often been able to resolve these questions relatively constructively, based on pragmatic dialogue with member states. This suggests two things. First, the UN offices in Geneva should look to their field offices in order to learn how they have found

ways to jointly support National Platforms. Second, the regional offices (where they exist) should be seen as the Secretariat’s primary tool to work with UN and non-UN agencies and regional and national levels in developing flexible forms of partnerships. They should continue to support initiatives that are led by national and regional actors and horizontal exchange of experience rather than promoting a template.

5.6.3. Regional and international partnerships

Although actual decisions on DRR priorities need to be made on national levels, there is a strong realisation that these need to reflect regional risk factors and joined-up policy processes. It is here that many of those interviewed stressed that the Secretariat is most needed and can provide most added value. It can help to mobilise the international and regional commitments (within and beyond the UN) upon which national DRR advocates depend to increase their national authorities’ commitments to the Strategy.

Networking has functioned surprisingly well at regional levels¹⁶ but the evaluation team judges that this is primarily due to the skills and initiative of the individuals involved. In order to create a stable and transparent set of relations, there is a need for a more explicit, proactive and strategically planned approach to ensure that the expertise existing within and among the regions is shared in an optimal manner. The Secretariat will never have the capacity to muster its own technical expertise in the myriad of topics that are required for effective DRR. Its potential comparative advantage in the field lies in its being perceived of by partners as a neutral, overarching structure providing access to a broad network and for bringing greater coherence to the work of regional actors.

The concept of “partnerships for application” is central to how the Secretariat views its interface with more operational agencies. At best, this form of partnership provides a flexible mandate to find ways to fit into the DRR community on a variety of levels and meet pressing needs. In Latin America these forms of partnership are widely appreciated for these reasons. At worst, it leads to adhocery and a slide into an operational role that conflicts with its more important coordination role and draws attention away from more strategic tasks. Policies must of course be linked to practice, but it is the role of other actors (above all at national levels) to ensure that this happens. **Many of those interviewed stressed that the Secretariat cannot be both an operational implementer and a coordinating ‘honest broker,’ but in “partnerships for application” and other agreements¹⁷ it sometimes appears that the Secretariat intends to pursue both roles. Unfortunately, clarity of purpose will inevitably come at a cost. If the Secretariat were to distance itself from operational tasks and products many national level actors would be disappointed since they value this form of assistance. This could perhaps be balanced by the advantages of a clearer, more manageable coordination role. The team acknowledges that this is a difficult choice, but it is one that needs to be made.**

5.6.4. Beyond ‘preaching to the converted’

One of the primary criticisms of the IDNDR was that it engaged a narrow group of DRR advocates, primarily from the technical and scientific community, and had difficulty developing a dialogue with the decision-makers who would ultimately be responsible for realising its aims. The ISDR was supposed to change that, and to a certain extent it undoubtedly has succeeded in expanding the focus, with many new stakeholders from government, civil defence and (in some cases) civil society becoming involved. Some links have indeed been made with actors involved

¹⁶ Frost, et al 2004

¹⁷ The MoU between UN/HABITAT and the Secretariat makes specific reference to establishing operational activities.

in sustainable development, climate change and the private sector, though these remain relatively tenuous and have generally not led to concrete actions and outcomes. The question that needs to be asked in this evaluation is whether this broadening of the dialogue has been sufficient. **The ultimate effectiveness of the Secretariat relies on reaching out beyond the UN family and those who are already advocating increased attention to DRR to primarily engage with the sustainable development and humanitarian communities that may be completely unaware of DRR. The evaluation team has noted the lack of success or clear strategy in transcending the tendency to ‘preach to the converted’. The Secretariat has certainly tried very hard to reach the sustainable development community (and more recently has begun to try to work with the humanitarian community). It has produced a large number of outputs in the form of reports, online discussions and other activities, but the outcomes of these efforts have been limited.**

For example, as mentioned earlier, progress has been made over the years in inserting references to DRR into some declarations and plans in the development sphere.¹⁸ The gap appears to be in determining what to do after these declarations have been made. One interviewee expressed concerns that these efforts are often “conference-driven” and that it was important to draw attention to implementation processes rather than such ‘products.’ In the view of the evaluation team, advocacy for acting on these commitments (many of which consist of passing references to DRR within long lists of ‘priorities’) has not been effective due to insufficient analyses of the nature of the policy processes that this advocacy is intended to influence. As mentioned above, the focus has been on repeatedly trying to drive in ‘what we want to say’ rather than exploring ‘what they might be ready to listen to or be able to act upon.’ There have been constructive efforts to begin addressing this fundamental DRR challenge in recent years,¹⁹ but these lessons need to be better absorbed into Secretariat strategies.

Perhaps the greatest current challenge confronting the Secretariat in this regard is in its choice of approaches to develop indicators for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. In order to have an impact, these indicators must relate to the strategic concerns of development actors who are increasingly experiencing a ‘mainstreaming fatigue’ with regard to the many issues they are being pressed to address in policy formation (e.g., poverty alleviation, gender, HIV/AIDS, etc.). There is a tendency to take a supply side approach to promoting policy change by preparing daunting lists of ‘expected results’, without analysis of how to navigate among the various demands that are facing political decision-makers and how their ‘priorities’ are actually prioritised.

It should be highlighted that the Secretariat has an obligation to also develop links with the humanitarian community. The Hyogo Framework for Action and earlier decisions make explicit reference to the need for strengthened disaster preparedness, but this is rarely reflected in the Secretariat’s publications and other efforts. The work of the Early Warning Platform has thus far focused primarily on early warning as a technical risk identification tool. Calls have been made for greater attention to community preparedness, but the evaluation team’s queries with organisations involved in community preparedness uncovered few contacts at this point. Apart from some dialogue with the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC), IFRC and ongoing discussions of how to strengthen UNDMT, there is very little contact with humanitarian actors in general, and some Secretariat staff do not see this as a priority. Interviews and questionnaire

¹⁸ Extracts Relevant to Disaster Risk Reduction from International Policy Initiatives 1994-2003, IATF/DR May 2004

¹⁹ See, Benson & Twigg 2004; La Trobe & Venton 2003; there are also a myriad of analyses available of how PRSP processes can be influenced.

replies consistently confirmed this lack of links to the humanitarian sphere. There is significant frustration among those working with civil defence structures over feeling relatively left out of DRR efforts. The evaluation team found relations with OCHA (the seemingly obvious entry point) to be weak.

5.7. Management, finance and governance

5.7.1. Whose Secretariat?

Enhanced vision, credibility, trust and focus for the Secretariat are dependent on a decision as to whether it is to be a 'secretariat', and in which case *whose*. **The evaluation team does not view the Secretariat's current status as constituting that of a 'secretariat' since it does not have a clearly defined set of accountabilities to a clearly defined membership.** As mentioned earlier, various documents, notably the Strategic Framework 2006-2007, fail to make clear the differentiation between the responsibilities of the Secretariat and the tasks of the international community in living up to the Strategy. The failure to consistently differentiate between expectations regarding the Secretariat and the Strategy has led to ambiguity in direction and has blurred lines of accountability. It has in some cases created confusion rather than coordination among the UN agencies, some of which do not understand the status of the Secretariat and their own responsibilities for implementing the Strategy. The placement of the Secretariat under the USG for Humanitarian Affairs leads to false impression (by some) that the focus is on disaster/humanitarian response. There are even some individuals within the UN that assume that the Secretariat is subservient to OCHA.

In its recent funding request the Secretariat describes its accountabilities as follows:

The Secretariat responds to several accountabilities - to the General Assembly through the UN Secretary-General's reporting to the Second Committee under "Environment and Sustainable Development"; to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs who is also head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for ISDR administrative matters; to the donors who supply the full funding of the Secretariat activities; and to partners in the IATF/DR and beyond, for providing the leadership and support expected of it.

Due to these multiple accountabilities, one respondent referred to the Secretariat as being "without a clear steering mechanism", which has left it "operating in a void of accountability." There is concern that by being accountable to so many different structures, in the end, the Secretariat is accountable to nobody.

Some documents refer to the "IATF/DR and its Secretariat," implying that it is a Secretariat fully answerable to the IATF/DR, which is clearly is not. Much of the work on the Secretariat policy unit is dedicated to servicing the IATF/DR and assisting, encouraging and facilitating the working groups. The results of these efforts have been mixed. This is not necessarily the fault of the Secretariat itself. Several of those interviewed questioned whether the IATF/DR is a structure that can be expected to lead international efforts to implement the Strategy. One donor referred to it as an "unwieldy beast" whose work tended to "water down" response to strategic issues, an impression that was repeated in several interviews. It is unrealistic to assume that a group consisting of a somewhat unstructured mix of UN agencies, regional entities and disparate technical specialists can be said to have a genuine mandate or capacity to drive the DRR agenda

forward and accomplish such massive tasks. There are currently suggestions that the IATF/DR be restructured and considerably expanded. This would certainly provide benefits in terms of broadened ownership over the ISDR agenda and could introduce new and valuable perspectives, but could also result in an even more unwieldy and unpredictable agenda and greatly increased demands on the Secretariat for servicing the expanded structure.

Although the evaluation team did not have an opportunity to closely review the work of the IATF/DR and its relationship with the Secretariat, it has had an opportunity to draw some conclusions:

- **The IATF/DR clearly has a role in providing broad normative direction for the Secretariat and building wide, multi-stakeholder ownership for the Strategy.**
- **This ownership should stem from insight, awareness and day-to-day contacts with the Secretariat, but need not extend to control over the workplan and budget.**
- **Indeed, any control functions over the Secretariat on the part of the IATF/DR would carry with it the danger of conflicts of interest if the ISDR Trust Fund grows to the extent that it becomes a significant source of funding for the activities of IATF/DR members.**
- **It is unlikely that the IATF/DR will become an effective mechanism for ensuring that the Secretariat has a realistic and manageable agenda, suggesting that direct governance with respect to workplans should come from a smaller steering committee.**
- **The reformed IATF/DR should explicitly define its role as one of undertaking tasks, and not of choosing and allocating tasks to the Secretariat.**
- **The roles of the Secretariat in servicing the IATF/DR therefore need to be clearly specified, especially if the membership of the IATF/DR is broadened to include actors who would presumably not have a full understanding of the constraints on the Secretariat's capacities and functions.**

5.7.2. Governance

In the course of this evaluation, some observers (especially donors) stressed the need for greater clarity regarding the Secretariat's governance, and asked the evaluation team to provide guidance on the topic. Governance issues were taken up in a high-level meeting in Kobe with respect to reforming the structure of the IATF/DR, and other reviews are in the process of developing proposals. **In assessing the functioning of the Secretariat, the evaluation team has concluded that many of the 'governance issues' also relate to management within the Secretariat and between the Secretariat and the Office of the USG. The evaluation therefore recommends that the USG addresses governance reform together with an overview of management within the Secretariat and between the Secretariat and the Office of the USG.** Several of those interviewed stressed that the office of the USG needs to reinforce its administrative and financial management role, as well as more forcefully promoting the Strategy vis-à-vis ECOSOC and the UN system more generally.

Restructured governance should also take into account whether the mechanism is to act as primarily a UN coordination office, seeking to reach out, or if it is to strive to adopt greater autonomy from the internal UN DRR architecture in order to act within a wider DRR sphere. There are strong reasons for a move toward the latter, not least given the scale of the challenges in implementing the Hyogo Framework, which would demand far closer engagement with IFIs, NGOs and other actors than at present. This would require a radical reassessment of governance and funding mechanisms. Such an alternative would need to be built on close dialogue with agencies that at present show relatively little ownership of the ISDR process. An independent

working group, with limited UN representation, would be needed to develop such a structure. Most of the DRR restructuring discussions underway during the course of this evaluation have been primarily focused on UN restructuring. The evaluation team therefore expects that this internal process will take precedence over the creation of such an autonomous mechanism.

The primary focus of the Hyogo Framework for Action is to transcend the boundaries of the disaster reduction community by better relating to the concerns of the sustainable development and humanitarian communities. The future governance structure should reflect this aim. This suggests that a mechanism accountable to those who are already part of the disaster reduction community (i.e., being 'their' secretariat) could be problematic.

The status and role of the ISDR Support Group has been vague. The Secretariat is seen to be donor-driven, and donors have dominated the ISDR Support Group. This would indicate a need to ensure that at the very least this group should provide a forum for ensuring good donorship. The evaluation team does not suggest that it assumes a formal governance role, but it could support the establishment of a broadened steering group. This would require further investigation. Some donors would not be able to act as members of a committee that steers an organisation that they fund.

Suggestions have been made that the IASC could be a model for a reformed ISDR governance/management structure. The evaluation team considers this a potentially appropriate approach due to its emphasis on top-level agency representation, time-bound and focused initiatives and clear-cut relations between governance and the Secretariat itself. It could be considered if a more streamlined IATF/DR was to be established, with a focus restricted to a few key topics per year. The team does not see such a model as appropriate if the Secretariat and the IATF/DR are expected to retain their current commitments to moving the DRR agenda forward on a very broad front.

The evaluation team concludes that a strong steering committee should be established consisting of three major donors, UNDP, OCHA and revolving representation from all regions, two other ITAF/DR members and one IFI. This steering committee should eventually replace the ISDR Support Group after an interim period.

5.7.3. Management

Some concerns have been expressed that a small organisation such as the Secretariat need not and should not be burdened with servicing and responding to specific demands from a strong, high-level governance structure. In order to get on with its work in a more focused manner, the solution may lie in strengthened internal management and tighter management relations between the Secretariat and the office of the USG. **The evaluation team concurs with the view that governance should be as 'light' as possible, while retaining sufficient insight and clout to follow, advise, encourage and defend the Secretariat. The need to 'defend' the Secretariat is stressed in order to ensure that key stakeholders do not derail efforts to establish and maintain strategic plans.**

The evaluation team sees stronger external management as a pragmatic and straightforward solution to many of the Secretariat's problems. However, it is unrealistic to expect that the USG himself will be able to allot sufficient time to take on these tasks. Options should be explored for a senior member of his team (presumably the Assistant Secretary-General) to take on expanded management and oversight responsibilities. This is a sensitive area. A Secretariat under stronger management from the office of the USG, would provide a more manageable structure and strengthen links to ECOSOC and the General

Assembly, but could suffer from being seen as less directly accountable to member states and could leave some with an impression that the Secretariat has become ‘swallowed’ by OCHA, thereby weakening potential links to development actors. Particularly if this latter option is chosen, a strong and broad-based steering committee would be needed to counteract this impression. The Secretariat could, for example, be ‘hosted’ in the manner of ProVention, initially at the World Bank and now the IFRC, while retaining clear accountabilities beyond OCHA. **It should be highlighted again that respondents have almost unanimously noted the importance they place on the autonomy of the Secretariat. There is no desire that the Secretariat be subsumed in another UN agency.**

In addition to external management, as mentioned earlier, the current internal management is perceived to have failed to maintain a focus on its strategic plan. This is certainly to a large extent a result of financial instability, but there is also a perception that management has not been sufficiently clear and steadfast in defending its own priorities. Any organisation must find an appropriate balance between openness and flexibility on the one hand, and vision and focus on the other. There is a widespread perception that the Secretariat’s management has erred in allowing this balance to tip in favour of the former. The evaluation team concurs in this view.

A significant number of those interviewed expressed doubts about the level of technical competence of the Secretariat, and concerns that tasks are not assigned based on the technical skills of specific staff. The evaluation team concurs that many key technical competencies are lacking, but concludes that a convening function does not require in-house capacities on the wide range of technical areas that DRR policy touches upon. It should be noted that a recent evaluation of ProVention encountered no such complaints about generalists in its core staff since qualified specialists were routinely engaged in specific assignments.²⁰ The ProVention and IASC Secretariats work more as nodes in their respective networks in that their staff do not engage in directly running programmes. They are also far smaller than the ISDR Secretariat as they have been able to maintain a narrow focus on commissioning policy analyses and convening policy discussions. **In light of the scale of its resources and its self-proclaimed role as a ‘network of networks’ the Secretariat’s task would seem to be one of building bridges between the different technical networks in the DRR community that contain appropriate levels of expertise. This would require a firmer management commitment to consistently focus on core functions and refuse to take on tasks that could and should be managed by other actors.** Feedback in this evaluation revealed some positive examples acting as a network node (especially the inputs into *Living with Risk* and *ISDR Informs*), but the widespread complaints received suggest that more efforts are needed to mobilise and utilise the expertise within the broader DRR community.

The evaluation team concludes that the Secretariat’s human resource management should be planned in so far as possible to adopt a lean ‘secretariat’ structure such as that used by ProVention or the IASC. It acknowledges, however, that its relation to the Strategy, its servicing role vis-à-vis the IATF/DR and its coordination role within the UN mean that it will need to manage a wider range of tasks and therefore will not be able to act in an equally lean manner. It will, for example, need to retain regional offices.

5.7.4. The Trust Fund and its impact on the scope and focus of the Secretariat’s work

The ISDR Secretariat is funded exclusively from voluntary contributions through the *Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction*. It does not receive funding from the regular UN budget. The very limited long-term commitments to contribute to the Trust Fund and the total lack of support from the UN

²⁰ Beck 2005

regular budget have been recognised by the Secretariat itself and many of the stakeholders interviewed as key obstacles to credibility, continuity and focus. Some observers have gone so far as to question the need for a Secretariat if there is no financial evidence of a commitment to the Strategy from the UN itself. Contributions are often small and short term in nature, except for multi-year commitments from Germany, DFID (UK) and Sida (Sweden). The Secretariat's financial planning is further complicated by a number of planning processes and time frames that operate in parallel. The funding structure of the Secretariat has influenced the focus and structure of the Secretariat itself, including the selection of the field locations, selection of partnerships and projects.

A notable factor regarding the Secretariat's donor relations is that many of the key decision-makers regarding contributions to the Trust Fund are national missions in Geneva who may primarily deal with disaster response, and manage funding windows that are structured to address these short-term rapid response issues. This creates a problem for organisations such as the Secretariat (and indeed for other DRR initiatives) that require longer-term structures to be effective. This is perhaps a symptom of a more fundamental problem in that the development community in general has shown little commitment to DRR, a topic that they prefer to leave in the hands of humanitarians.

The current financial structure of the Secretariat is untenable. Strategic planning, programme continuity, human resource management and a narrow, clear focus of activities are all dependent on greater financial stability. The evaluation concludes that this continuity must come from two sources. Reallocations should be made from the UN regular budget to cover at least two staff positions and there must be a minimum of at least four significant multiyear donor funding commitments. If these commitments are not made available the USG should review whether or not there is sufficient will among donors and within the UN system to continue maintaining an ISDR Secretariat.

While acknowledging the difficulties of obtaining financial support for DRR itself, it is important to note that there are many examples of risk reduction initiatives accessing long-term funding via NGOs and other agencies under different labels, e.g., food security. Part of the funding challenge may therefore not be that DRR falls victim to the infamous relief to development gap, but rather that it is being seen as more concrete and relevant to different agencies mandates when 'packaged' within other structures. These examples suggest that there may not be a need for more funding for DRR, but rather for more attention to be paid to the interplay between acute vulnerability to disaster risks and the more mainstream efforts to address chronic vulnerability and poverty. It is in this grey zone where support is mobilised for investments in food security, safety nets and other areas where household and community resilience is supported.

There are suggestions being floated that the ISDR Trust Fund be expanded significantly as a channel for large-scale support to DRR activities internationally. The evaluation team notes that if the Secretariat was to exert control over major resources this would significantly influence its status as an 'honest broker', and greatly increase its responsibilities to monitor and account for the use of these resources. These implications deserve considerable attention in the future if these proposals are to be pursued. The Secretariat's management of the fund associated with the Early Warning Strengthening Project may provide valuable lessons as a 'pilot' for possible future expansion into such a role, and therefore should be closely monitored.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

The strengths of the Secretariat are its:

- unique role as an honest broker within and beyond the UN system;
- dedicated and hard working staff;
- broad network within the DRR community;
- trust as an open and flexible partner;
- visibility resulting (partially) from the WCDR;
- proven ability to attract project funding; and
- established institutional infrastructure/relationships in Geneva and among the regional offices.

The weaknesses of the Secretariat are its:

- failure to obtain long-term funding commitments;
- unclear and fragmented profile;
- inappropriate mix of staff competencies in relation to needs;
- poorly defined governance;
- weak entry points into many key humanitarian and development policy fora;
- difficulties in adapting its programming to availability of resources; and
- uncertainties regarding how to define priorities for a small Secretariat facing a massive strategic challenge.

The opportunities facing the Secretariat are to:

- build on the momentum of the WCDR;
- build on the political will that has (perhaps) been generated by the tsunami;
- play a central role in the restructuring of the international architecture of DRR now under consideration;
- explore whether the massive post-tsunami recovery operations are a genuine opportunity to build less disaster prone societies; and
- ensure that the political commitments made to DRR made in recent years are actually implemented.

The threats facing the Secretariat are:

- the potential for disillusionment if the grand declarations made at the WCDR are not realised;
- simmering distrust resulting from unrealistic expectations and tensions within the DRR community;
- the notoriously short post-disaster memory of the international community and national authorities regarding the importance of DRR;
- pressures to undertake activities that do not contribute to an appropriate balance within a small Secretariat; and
- its ambiguous status in a context where there are pressures for decisive action.

6.1.1. The UN needs an autonomous ‘honest broker’ in DRR

The member states want and need an ISDR Secretariat. There is no other UN structure that has the capability or potential to act as an ‘honest broker.’ The Secretariat needs to retain a global mandate with strengthened two-way communication channels with member states.

Despite what was in many cases very strong criticism of the Secretariat’s work, the evaluation team notes that there remains a large degree of ‘latent credibility.’ If stakeholders can better understand what the Secretariat does and why it does it, increased political and financial support will be forthcoming.

Above all the Secretariat needs a tighter strategic focus if it is to retain and enhance its credibility. This can best be achieved if there is a clearer, more pragmatic and transparent differentiation between the roles of the Secretariat and the challenges of implementing the Strategy. The Secretariat cannot make significant impact or ensure implementation of all aspects of the Strategy. The Hyogo Framework for Action describes a number of tasks to be undertaken by “partners in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in particular, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction and its members, in collaboration with relevant national, regional, international and United Nations bodies and supported by the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.” This implies a purely supportive role for the Secretariat. The Secretariat can draw attention to the gaps where its partners fail to live up to their obligations, but it should not attempt to fill them.

The Secretariat is a modest sized Geneva-based office with even more modest regional offices. It operates with very unstable financing. Its success depends on more stable financing, but the information gathered in the course of this evaluation indicates that a significant increase in quantity of financing for UN DRR initiatives in general and the Secretariat in particular is not to be expected. Neither is it needed to carry out its core functions. Problems have been due to lack of certainty in funding and lack of focus. **The team sees the need for strategic reorganisation of the Secretariat to achieve two basic aims. First, there is a need to for the director and a restructured administrative cluster to ensure stability of focus and a sober yet strategic direction supported by solid human resource management, planning and finance structures. Second the two primary functions of policy support and information/communication need to be strengthened so as to support the ISDR’s partners at international, regional and national levels.** It is *their* level of engagement (rather than the work of the Secretariat itself) that will determine the implementation of the Strategy. An undue emphasis on the products of the Secretariat itself and its relations with other UN agencies has tended to obscure this fundamental underlying basis for reducing disaster risks. Neither the Secretariat, nor the entire UN system can achieve the ambitious goals of the Hyogo Framework for Action. A reformed and restructured Secretariat must act cognisant of the fact that it is member states, civil society and other key actors, including IFIs and the private sector, which will implement the Strategy. **This means that every task that the Secretariat undertakes should be analysed to determine whether the activity in question could be undertaken by these other actors. The fact that other stakeholders are failing to uphold their commitments to invest in DRR is insufficient justification for the Secretariat to fill the breach. Genuine, sustainable and appropriate added value should be primarily measured with respect to how well the Secretariat has leveraged other actors to live up to their responsibilities. Quantitative reporting of the Secretariat’s own outputs should not be allowed to distract attention from the fundamental importance of the Secretariat avoiding pressures for ‘mission creep.’**

6.1.2. Vision

The primary role of the Secretariat should be to ensure that ISDR partners can demonstrate to key decision-makers that they 'are not alone'. The successes of the Secretariat in the WCDR, other global consultations and in publications such as *Living with Risk* and *ISDR Informs* exemplify this central role. In order to better play this role the Secretariat needs to show a consolidated UN commitment to disaster risk reduction. This includes synthesising, analysing and helping to share experience in policy formation and application of tools in DRR within and across regions. In order to do so it will need to help its partners to galvanise media attention and encourage that the media presents evidence-based information and analyses that can in turn impact on the creation of political will that is the Secretariat's core mission. It must above all seek to relate its activities to the demands of key stakeholders - *including those actors who are not in the DRR community itself* - for policy and technical support in bringing an understanding of disaster risk into their ongoing work. None of these tasks requires operational engagements. All of these tasks require strengthened quality, continuity and focus. All of these tasks require that the Secretariat avoids operational spheres in order to ensure that it is perceived to be an 'honest broker' and not a competitor.

6.1.3. Realism

The *quantity* of work that the Secretariat has produced since its creation is impressive. What is needed at this point is to narrow the focus in order that resources can be concentrated in such a way as to ensure that the *quality* of the Secretariat's essential functions is enhanced, and so that all stakeholders can better understand what they can expect and not expect from the Secretariat. These adjustments are not just a task for the Secretariat, but also for the DRR community in general and the Secretariat's donors in particular. Interviews indicated that those with a close involvement in the ISDR were willing to sacrifice their own priorities in order to attain a more realistic set of objectives.

6.1.4. Programmatic and financial continuity

Programmatic continuity is dependent on greater stability in financing, more steadfast choice of priorities, and greater attention to what is required to establish a limited number of quality service functions. It is neither efficient nor effective to create a clearinghouse or a communications strategy today if they are to be abandoned tomorrow when funding runs out or a decision is made to focus on a different task from the Hyogo Framework for Action. The Secretariat – and its eventually strengthened governance structure - need to say no to functions that cannot be handled in an effective manner with the scale and timeframe of the resources on offer. Saying no is a powerful message to those promoting pet and distractive projects. Saying no is a demonstration of commitment to quality and continuity that will provide material benefits in the medium- to long-term.

6.1.5. Structure

The Secretariat needs to be able to bring together three types of expertise: technical knowledge, communications and policy analysis. This expertise needs to be of sufficiently senior level to ensure that its intended audience is willing to listen and has confidence in the message being presented. The range of technical knowledge varies so enormously that this must presumably be contracted on a short-term basis according to the types of disaster risks that are being addressed at a given time. The Secretariat's partners will in many cases be ready to contribute such expertise 'in kind.' Communications and policy analysis are core functions that the Secretariat needs on an ongoing basis. The Secretariat's recruitment strategies should reflect a reassessment of how to ensure that staffing is appropriate for these two key functions.

6.2. Proposed structural reform of the Secretariat

As mentioned above, a structural reform of the Secretariat's internal functions should be paired with a review of its external management and governance. Past experience has shown that the prevailing multiple accountabilities between the Secretariat and external actors are not conducive to steadfast implementation of strategic plans and structures. The following are the evaluation team's overall suggestions for structural reform within the Secretariat, but will naturally need to be modified in accordance with the process that is chosen for governance reform.

6.2.1. Information/communication

The *tasks of the information/communication cluster* should consist of creating a genuine and forceful communications strategy and rethinking how it should provide information services. Communications is the main vehicle for strengthened political will, which is the primary objective of the Secretariat. A clear communications strategy needs to include a limited number of planned, consecutive messages each year and solid links between research, those experimenting with applying new approaches and those engaged in the processes through which national policies are being formed.

The Secretariat has a clear formal mandate to act as an information clearinghouse, but interviews have shown that demand for this service is variable and there is no consensus on what a clearinghouse should be. Major investments in clearinghouse activities should be preceded by closer evidence-based analysis and specification of the niche of the Secretariat in the 'age of Google'. Mere speculation about target groups and audiences should be avoided.

There is certainly a place for a flagship publication such as *Living with Risk* to be updated on a regular basis, the regional magazines such as *ISDR Informs*, and CDs providing access to document collections, but apart from these, the Secretariat need not engage itself in a wide variety of publications. The Secretariat's strength is in its experience and knowledge about what educational and information materials are needed. It should scale-back its engagement to primarily that of supporting its regional and national partners in their efforts to themselves meet these demands.

Finally, a network structure such as the Secretariat needs to know who is in its network and what they are doing. It needs the capacity to help stakeholders in country X learn from relevant experience in country Y. The Secretariat has managed these tasks effectively on a personal basis, but its databases and rosters need to be improved and its understanding of the 'science' of networking needs to be enhanced. It should enlist the support of members of its network with expertise in communities of practice (e.g., the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation) to learn about how this can be better managed.

Skills needed for this cluster are information management, mass communications, media relations and networking.

6.2.2. Policy

The *tasks of the policy cluster* should consist of finding an optimum balance between coordinating and promoting DRR initiatives within the UN system and in linking the UN DRR agenda to the broader international and national efforts to achieve the goals of the ISDR. It should be a 'listening post', making maximum use of its regional offices and national/regional partnerships, to ensure that DRR advocates at operational levels can access technical, political and moral support as they pursue their objectives. Synthesis work in defining DRR policies is

needed, but the emphasis should be on using such syntheses as a point of departure for sharing experience and supporting processes that are being driven at national and regional levels. The Secretariat should build on the momentum of the WCDR, not by operational activities, but rather by more clearly defining its role as one of convening key political stakeholders, the UN system and various communities of practice for evidence-based discussions of how to move the ISDR forward.

A key aspect of this convening function should be to identify a limited number of strategic DRR issues per year and to bring together high-level expertise for evidence-based discussions and debate. The Secretariat should strive to be forward looking in this regard and choose topics that can be expected to emerge 'next year.' For example, there is a danger that the massive post-tsunami recovery and reconstruction investments will not pay sufficient attention to risk reduction factors. The policy cluster could start now by establishing a dialogue with actors analysing these efforts (e.g., the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition) to convene a debate on DRR in recovery and thereby position the Secretariat at the cutting edge of a debate that has as yet not begun. There may be opportunities to develop partnerships with emerging platforms and think tanks on such topics.

The policy cluster should work with the regional offices to continue the process of supporting National Platforms and other formal and informal groups of stakeholders at national levels. It should take a lead in ensuring that a consensus is formed with other UN agencies in Geneva and New York about relative roles and responsibilities for this process, taking into account the many very important non-UN actors in these processes.

Skills needed for this cluster are those of policy analysis and experience with mainstream development and humanitarian policy formation (e.g., PRSP processes, protection issues, etc.).

6.2.3. Regional offices

The *tasks of the regional offices* should consist of supporting actors within their respective regions to strengthen their own networks and demonstrate that a coordinated UN stands behind them. This includes establishing a clearer stance on how interagency roles in the UN system can be worked out at field level, based on the good and bad experience that has been accumulated since the start of the IDNDR. The regional offices can do much to influence an ongoing international debate on DRR that is presently overly Geneva/New York biased. Two-way learning is thus needed between the regional offices and Geneva to ensure that the experience of both guides the search for more effective coordination of DRR efforts and an understanding of who could and should undertake different tasks in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action.

A more restrictive use of 'partnerships for application' can conserve resources for tasks where the Secretariat has a unique role and mandate, while also helping the Secretariat to maintain its status as an 'honest broker' without vested interests in implementation. There may be some 'cutting edge' topics where limited 'partnerships for application' would still be appropriate, but on the whole this area of work should be reduced. More stringent guidelines are needed as to what the regional offices should and should not undertake. It is acknowledged that this may lead to some disappointment among those who appreciate these projects, but this may be allayed by a more proactive role in helping actors within a given region to share experience and learn from one another.

The regional offices should be reliant for their existence on concrete evidence of support from their respective regions. For this reason they should be increasingly financed from the

governments and organisations that they serve. After a two year interim period the offices should be at least 25% financed by local resources.

Skills needed for the regional offices are experience in convening technical and political consultations, networking and policy analysis, together with experience in coordination within the UN system.

6.2.4. Finance and administration

The tasks of the *finance and administration cluster* should consist of ensuring that plans and budgets accurately reflect real commitments to contribute to the ISDR Trust Fund, and that clear merit-based recruitment procedures are applied. The Secretariat's planning and budget procedures should be more focused on ensuring continuity and focus. It is essential that the Secretariat recruits appropriate and sufficiently senior personnel for different tasks and follows transparent, independent and competitive recruitment processes. If it is not possible to attract appropriate staff it may be better to leave certain posts vacant and concentrate available resources on other tasks. It is unlikely that full stakeholder satisfaction can be achieved in choice of human resources, as there will always be strong underlying tensions between different fields of risk reduction. Nonetheless, given prevailing distrust it is particularly important to ensure that procedures are impeccably transparent and merit-based.

Skills needed for this cluster are UN procedures for planning and budgeting and human resource management.

6.2.5. Leadership

The tasks of the *leadership of the Secretariat* should consist of ensuring vision, realism and focus, both within the organisation and vis-à-vis outside stakeholders. Based on advice from its three clusters and regional offices, it should transparently choose a viable range of activities and propose these to whatever governance and higher-level management structures are established. A more targeted approach to international outreach is needed, whereby a variety of stakeholders in the implementation of the Strategy attend meetings and conferences within their realms of competence, leaving the Secretariat leadership to concentrate more on managing the Secretariat and ensuring strategic focus. Even though many of those interviewed were honoured to have visits from the Director, priority should be given to greater use of specific technical competencies in international presentations and more continuity in contacts with National Platforms (to the extent that this is possible within the Secretariat's finances). In addition, members of National Platforms and focal points should be supported to link with one another and in so doing 'represent the Strategy'. Strong and focused leadership could provide a foundation for such a horizontal networking process under the auspices of the ISDR.

As is apparent from this proposed structure, the tasks of the advocacy unit should be mainstreamed within the work of the Secretariat leadership, information/communication and policy clusters and in some respect further decentralised to the regional offices. The advocacy objectives of the Strategy should be conceptualised as an outcome to which the Secretariat should contribute through its policy analysis and information/communication functions, but should be carried out primarily by DRR advocates at national and regional levels and within higher levels of the UN Secretariat itself.

6.3. Recommendations

1. In order to move forward in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action the UN needs a secretariat for DRR, and should therefore continue to maintain an ISDR Secretariat, but with major revisions to the current structure and focus. (5.2., 5.7.3, 6.1.1.)

- The size of the Secretariat should remain modest, but with some shift of resources from Geneva to the regional offices. (5.7.3.)
- The regional offices should reflect demonstrable regional demands, and therefore, after a pilot period of two years, their continued existence should be contingent on at least 25% of funding originating from respective regions. (6.2.3.)
- Fundraising strategies should emphasise stability/quality of funding as opposed to aiming to achieve significant growth. The continued existence of the Secretariat should be contingent on the availability of at least four multiyear unearmarked funding commitments of at least USD500,000. (5.1., 5.7.4.)
- The USG should propose at the next UN biennium that at least two Secretariat positions be funded from the UN regular budget in order to provide stability and to concretely demonstrate UN commitment to the implementation of the ISDR. (5.7.4.)
- The USG should present significantly reformed governance structures for the Secretariat based on the proposal in Recommendation Five below. (5.7.2.)

2. The Secretariat (together with a strengthened governance structure) should choose a narrow, clearly defined and realistic range of strategic tasks and priorities. (5.1., 5.4., 6.1.2.)

- The Secretariat's leadership should take a consistent stance on priorities, even if this requires saying no to offers of support that do not fall within this strategy. (5.2., 6.1.4.)
- The ISDR Support Group and the USG (together with a future strengthened governance structure) should work actively with the Secretariat to develop an appropriate three year strategic plan (see following points) and then actively step in to 'defend' the Secretariat if pressures should arise to deviate from this plan. (5.7.3.)
- Above all, the Secretariat should take forceful steps to present a narrower, more comprehensible image based on themes where it can muster appropriate levels of technical expertise. This should include: (6.1.2., 6.1.3.)
 - Focus on one or two annual forward-looking strategic themes/messages of pressing significance for DRR, while bringing in specific technical support to synthesise and facilitate debate on these themes. (5.7.2., 6.8.2.)
 - Give priority to attendance at meetings and conferences on strategic themes where it can present an innovative and evidence-based message, possibly using well-known and respected (seconded) professionals from member states, other organisations and respected advocates who speak on behalf of the Strategy. (5.5.1., 5.6.3.)
 - Limit publications to those that provide demonstrated added value and that require the leadership of an international UN secretariat, i.e., periodically updated editions of *Living with Risk* and regionally produced *ISDR Informs*. Other publications should be curtailed significantly. (5.5.2., 6.2.2.)
 - Mandated 'clearinghouse' functions should be redefined as being limited to providing access to UN DRR materials with links to other sites with more extensive DRR collections, and support to networking through information directly relevant to specific communities of practice, and other national, regional and international networks. (5.5.2., 6.2.1.)

3. The Secretariat's strategic plan should provide added value to member states for policy analyses and communication/information support, based primarily on enhanced intra- and inter-regional networking. (5.6.3.)

- The regional offices and policy cluster in Geneva should actively link relevant expertise to those who need it. This will require a highly proactive and more efficiently structured networking approach whereby national and regional actors are convened to consider how they themselves can move forward on strategic themes. (5.4.5., 5.4.8., 5.6.3., 6.2.3.)
- The Secretariat should learn from and partners' experience in choosing how to promote nationally relevant and realistically achievable indicators for implementation of the Strategy. (5.6.3.)
- The advocacy objectives of the Strategy should be supported through the Secretariat's policy analysis and information/communication functions, but which should be carried out together with DRR advocates at national and regional levels and within higher levels of the UN Secretariat itself. (6.2.)
- The Secretariat's efforts to influence mainstream development policy processes should be reviewed by experts in IFI-supported policy processes to ensure that appropriate and realistic entry points may be found that are seen as compelling by key development actors. (5.3., 5.5.1., 5.6.4.)
- The Secretariat should strictly limit its operational activities ('partnerships for application') and be cautious about raising national stakeholders' expectations for receiving material assistance in actually implementing the aims of the ISDR. (5.6.3., 6.2.3.)
- National Platforms and other informal partnerships should be strongly supported, but plans for this support should reflect a pragmatic assessment of what these forms of collaboration should aim to achieve. (5.2., 5.6.2.)
- In order to support this process a consensus must be found between the Secretariat and other UN agencies about how to proceed with a coherent and joined-up perspective on the concept of platforms and partnership at national levels. (5.6.1., 5.6.2.)

4. In order to obtain a clear profile and use available resources effectively a major structural reform of the Secretariat is required, focusing on two key functions at central and regional levels: policy analysis and communication/information. (6.1.1., 6.2.)

- The USG should instruct the Secretariat leadership to restructure the organisation around three clusters: administration/finance, policy analysis and information/communication, in addition to the office of the Director. (6.2.)
- The administration/finance cluster should take on a strengthened role through ensuring that plans and budgets are clearly formulated and followed, that they accurately reflect commitments to contribute to the ISDR Trust Fund, and that transparent merit-based recruitment procedures are applied for both short-term consultants and longer-term appointments. With the receipt of the long-term financial commitments (see recommendation one, above) longer-term contracts should be issued for core staff. (5.5.2., 5.7.3., 6.1.4., 6.2.4.)
- The tasks of the policy cluster should consist of finding an optimum balance between working *within* the UN system (coordinating and promoting a coherent UN approach to DRR), and *beyond* the UN system (linking the UN DRR agenda to the broader international and national efforts to achieve the goals of the ISDR). It should make maximum use of its regional offices and national/regional partnerships to ensure that operational DRR partners can access technical, political and moral support as they pursue their objectives. (5.2., 5.5.1., 5.6.1., 5.6.3.)
- The tasks of the information/communication cluster should consist of creating a forceful communications strategy that will impact on wider political will for DRR. This requires

rethinking how it should provide information services to ensure viable, quality services that provide unique added value. (5.5.2., 6.2.1.)

- Stringent guidelines should be developed for the regional offices that reflect defined added value and assurances that the Secretariat does not take on the tasks of member states. (5.6.3., 5.7.3., 6.2.3.)

5. The Secretariat's internal structural reform process should be undertaken in conjunction with a reform of governance and a review of the role of higher level management in order to ensure that the Secretariat can be held accountable for its work and to enable the Secretariat to retain a more steadfast focus on its strategic plan and functions. (5.7.1.)

- The starting point for governance reform should be to clearly recognise that the IATF/DR does not and should not constitute a governance structure for the Secretariat, and that the current ISDR Support Group cannot be said to provide a governance mechanism given its informal selection process. (5.7.1.)
- A strong steering committee should be established consisting of three major donors, UNDP, OCHA and revolving representation from all regions, two other ITAF/DR members and one IFI. (5.7.2.) This committee will replace the current ISDR Support Group after an interim period.
- The role of the USG should be to represent the ISDR as a Strategy within the UN leadership and the ECOSOC. The USG will not have the capacity to fully execute the needed promotion of DRR alone. Therefore the ASG should be delegated responsibility to support the USG in these tasks and to represent the USG in restructuring efforts and as a regular management oversight vis-à-vis the Secretariat. (5.7.2., 5.7.4.)

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

External Evaluation of the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)

1. Background and Rationale

Functions and responsibilities of ISDR Secretariat (see also annex 1)

The ISDR inter-agency secretariat was established in 2000 (A/RES/54/219) as a flexible structure managed by a Director under the authority of the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs.

This evaluation has been commissioned by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and aims to assess the effectiveness of the ISDR Secretariat in the performance of its functions and responsibilities, which are:

- To serve as the focal point within the United Nations system for the coordination of strategies and programmes for natural disaster reduction, and to ensure synergy between disaster reduction strategies and those in the socio-economic and humanitarian fields;
- To support the inter-agency task force for disaster reduction (IATF/DR) in the development of policies on natural disaster reduction;
- To promote a worldwide culture of reduction of the negative effects of natural hazards, through advocacy campaigns;
- To serve as an international information clearing house for the dissemination and exchange of information and knowledge on disaster reduction strategies; and
- To backstop the policy and advocacy activities of national committees for natural disaster reduction.

The evaluation will consider how the Secretariat relates with key-institutional mechanisms in place to help give effect to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in particular with the USG, IATF, ISDR Support Group, Trust Fund, networks of National Platforms and of experts, as well as with its partners with whom it has specific working agreements (partly defined in MoUs... (UNDP, OCHA, WMO, UNEP, others):

- The IATF/DR Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction is headed by the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and consists of 26 UN, international, regional and civil society organizations and meets twice a year²¹.
- The ISDR is supported by an ISDR Support Group (mainly donors but also some developing countries that are strong supporters of ISDR), which also meets on a regular basis, chaired by Switzerland.
- The ISDR Secretariat is funded exclusively from voluntary contributions through the Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction.
- The ISDR Secretariat participates in the establishment of national platforms for the advancement of sound national and regional disaster reduction policies.

²¹ The mandated functions of the IATF/DR are:

- a. to serve as the main forum within the United Nations system for devising strategies and policies for the reduction of natural hazards;
- b. to identify gaps in disaster reduction policies and programmes and recommend remedial action;
- c. to provide policy guidance to the ISDR secretariat; and
- d. to convene ad hoc meetings of experts on issues related to disaster reduction.

- Most of ISDR Secretariat's activities are undertaken in collaboration with other partners (UNDP and OCHA amongst others).
- The ISDR Secretariat has evolved a systematic two-year work-programme to provide the framework for its activities, and a logical framework, which was developed and reviewed in 2004 with DFID.

Recent Studies, and developments that the evaluation has to take into account:

In the past three years, many studies have been done about ISDR and the wider system (see also annex 2). The evaluation should take into account all these previous studies.

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR, 18-22 January 2005, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan) adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, along with the Hyogo Declaration. This framework outlines the priorities for the coming ten years in the area of disaster risk reduction, addressing States, regional bodies, international organizations and the ISDR (IATF/DR and secretariat). The evaluation should be formulating its recommendations taking into account the requirements and recommendations expressed in this Framework for Action (see §13-§20, §28 and §29 from DRAFT version). Doing this, it should look at the recommendations from further forward looking studies as possible developments of the system.

2. Overall Objective

To assess the effectiveness of the ISDR Secretariat in meeting its functions and responsibilities in line with its initial mandates, how these have evolved based on new requirements and presenting recommendations for the future role of the ISDR in light of the study's findings, other pertinent proposals, and the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Doing this, it will:

Examine the effectiveness of the Secretariat in carrying out its functions and responsibilities and in achieving its declared objectives

Analyse how effectively the secretariat relates to other parts of the ISDR system: IATF, member states/national constituencies, regional bodies, technical networks, and how effectively it works with partners with whom it has institutional arrangements (e.g. MoUs), i.e. OCHA, UNDP, WMO, PAHO, UNEP

Review and assess the value-added, relevance and appropriateness of the ISDR Secretariat's work-programme, its strategic orientation and its functional approach in performing its tasks, including the value-added of innovative partnerships

3. Key issues and scope

The following highlights the key issues upon which the evaluation should focus. The scope of the evaluation, however, should not be necessarily limited to the issues noted below. The consultants should raise and address any other relevant issues that may emerge during the conduct of the evaluation.

- Effectiveness (To what extent did the Secretariat achieve its intended functions and responsibilities?)
- How effectively has the Secretariat fulfilled its functions and roles in DRR/M in doing advocacy campaigns, serving as focal point within the UN system, supporting the IATF

- in the development of policies, serving as international information clearing house and backstopping of national committees?
- Value-added (what is Secretariat contributing to the field of natural disaster reduction that cannot be undertaken by existing other organizations- impact of the work)
 - How effectively has the ISDR Secretariat's work contributed to integrating disaster risk reduction and "the Strategy" into UN agencies approaches and programmes, international policy initiatives (sustainable development, climate change, SIDS, humanitarian agenda, etc.), and into regional and national policies.
 - To what extent is Secretariat's work seen as beneficial and bringing additional value by national and regional stakeholders, UN agencies, civil society and donors? Are its outputs and services being used and to what extent and for what purpose?
 - What has been the ISDR Secretariat's role in supporting the development of a network of National Platforms and as how effective have these platforms been perceived?
 - What is the value-added of the Secretariat's work in terms of interaction of regional / national offices with stakeholders of DRRM, of consultation with national governments, of outreach programmes
 - Relevance (How well do the ISDR Secretariat activities match the needs or problems which it is intended to address?)
 - To what extent are the objectives and strategies of the ISDR Secretariat still relevant? Is ISDR Secretariat's strategic plan appropriate for contributing to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action? What changes / adjustments if any in the Secretariat's work program need to be made in the light of the Framework?
 - Appropriateness (How has the ISDR Secretariat's capacities, selected strategies and institutional set-up achieved- or failed to achieve- the desired outcomes? How does the Secretariat relate to other actors?)
 - How does the Secretariat get guidance from and provide support to the USG?
 - What has been the role of the ISDR Secretariat in supporting the IATF process in its deliberations (see footnote 1) and how has the ISDR Secretariat made use of the guidance provided by IATF?
 - How does ISDR Secretariat interact with its main partners (OCHA, UNDP, WMO, ...)? How are the instruments in place (MoUs or other agreements or joint activities) used where available? Is the division of labour clear and effective?
 - How has the ISDR Secretariat learnt from and utilized recommendations from previous studies and donor reviews to date? Have these recommendations been translated in changes in the work programme and have changes been made to adjust to changing realities in field of disaster reduction?

- Is ISDR Secretariat's current funding appropriate and in line with its mandate? What strategies have been adopted to promote longer term financial sustainability of the Secretariat's programme and how effective have they been? How has co-funding of activities with agencies and countries, and public-private partnerships added resources to the limited budget of the Secretariat?
- What has been the use made of the Trust Fund and how strengthen its use to increase the resource base?

4. Methodology/Activities

The chosen method should allow the objectives of the evaluation to be addressed in the most cost-effective means available. Secondary data review will be required to track the evolution of ISDR's activities and to identify results. Mapping of key stakeholder groups (Interviewees) should be conducted early on during the desk review (see point 6) and representatives of these groups consulted. It is expected that primary data will be collected through a variety of methods, including key informant interviews, focus group interviews and e-mail/phone survey. The team should also visit one of the regional offices in Nairobi, Kenya or San Jose, Costa Rica and one country in Asia where it has developed relevant activities in order to consult with key stakeholders at the regional/country level and assess ISDR relevance in a regional and local context. Subsequent to the submission of the draft report, a one day workshop will be organized in Geneva with key ISDR stakeholders, including selected members of IATF, the Support Group and others.

It is anticipated that in the course of this evaluation the evaluation team will meet with the following key stakeholders:

- ISDR Secretariat staff
- Members (or cross-section) of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (IATF)
- OCHA, UNDP (BCPR and other areas), DESA, ProVention Consortium Secretariat and IFRC
- Regional and national stakeholders
- ISDR Support Group members
- And others as appropriate.

5. Management Arrangements

This is an independent evaluation commissioned by the USG and the final report is an independent report which shall come up with recommendations under his responsibility.

OCHA's Evaluation and Studies Unit (ESU) acts directly under the USG's authority and must ensure that the terms of reference are dealt with appropriately and reserves the right to reject approval of the report should the report not meet professional evaluation standards. As a guide to professional standards, OCHA is using the ALNAP Quality Proforma which will be provided to the consultants.

The ESU evaluation manager will follow the evaluation process closely, prepare all necessary documentation in collaboration with the ISDR Secretariat, request the Secretariat to set up all necessary appointments and schedules, stay in regular contact with the evaluation team for the duration of the evaluation exercise, and review, disseminate, collate comments on the draft report.

The evaluation manager will consult with main actors during the process either through advisory group of donors, of recipient countries, of IATF, UNDP and OCHA as appropriate.

The ISDR Secretariat will provide logistical support to the evaluation, assist in gathering all relevant background information, setting up relevant appointments and coordinating/organizing the two field visits of the team.

6. Duration of the Evaluation and Indicative Timeframe

The expected duration for this assignment is 58 working days (not including travel time), primarily focusing on data collection in New York and Geneva, visits and data collection to Nairobi, Kenya or San Jose, Costa Rica and a location in Asia to be determined, as well as interviews with relevant stakeholders in person or via phone/internet, as appropriate. The evaluation should commence in late March and a draft report should be submitted by mid-June 2005.

Time budget:

Inception Report / Briefings:	4 days End of March 2005
Desk Review (including interviewing key informants by phone/email)	10 days March – April 2005
Key Informant Interviews in New York & Geneva	10 days April 05 (5 days each)
Key Informant Interviews plus one country visit in the Region: Nairobi or San Jose	6 days May 05
Option for country visits in Asia (depending on budget)	6 days May 05
Report Writing (including incorporation of comments on draft report into the final report and follow-up discussions)	10 days May/June 05
Debriefing Workshop(s): Geneva	2 days late June / early July 05 (1 day workshop and 1 day preparation)
Travel:	10 days (5x2)

7. Expertise Required

This evaluation will require the services of two consultants who combine the following experience:

Experience with and knowledge of DRR and related UN institutional issues, including field experience in DRR/M

Experience in disaster reduction activities within sustainable development situations as well as within the humanitarian context.

Experience in monitoring and evaluation, preferably in the area of natural disasters.

Knowledge of the work of ISDR and of key agencies in the field of DRR/M

Institutional development and capacity building.

In-depth knowledge of inter-agency mechanisms, particularly in the UN context

Strong analytical skills and ability to prepare well-written reports in a timely manner

The selected team should reflect, to the extent possible, regional and gender diversity.

8. Deliverables

Brief inception report (max 1500 words), outlining the key issues to be covered and the proposed methodology to cover these issues; the report should also include a stakeholder mapping

Brief mid-review update to keep all parties apprised of progress, problems, etc.

Draft evaluation report of max 15'000 words and should include:

Executive Summary of max.2 pages

Performance assessment with respect to the criteria and key issues stated in section 3.

Recommendations addressing proposed improvements within the proposed Framework For Action and taking into account the recommendations of further forward looking studies.

Final Report (same format as draft) after agreement with ESU

9. Reporting Schedule and Format

The consultants will produce the following reports by the stated deadlines:

Evaluation inception report, including methodology and a draft outline of the report – March 2005 (to be confirmed).

Draft report - (by mid - June 2005).

Workshops in Geneva by end of June / beginning of July 2005

Final report with executive summary- by 15th of July 2005 (following the validation/ stakeholder workshop). The main report should be no more than 15,000 words, with additional relevant material annexed as required. It is expected, unless otherwise agreed with the consultants, that the report will closely follow the outline of the terms of reference, including a short background chapter, recommendations and lessons identified.

10. Use of the Report

It is expected that the IATF and the donor working group as well as OCHA and UNDP will review, discuss and take on the recommendations of this report. For this reason, a one-day evaluation review workshop is envisaged to engage the different stakeholders. This meeting should result into an action plan. The report will also be posted on OCHA-online, Reliefweb and the ISDR website.

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Annex 3. Persons interviewed

Mr Jan Egeland	UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs
Mr. John Webster	Second Secretary (Humanitarian Affairs), Permanent Mission of Great Britain in Geneva
Mr. Rodolfo Guzman	Director, Strategic Planning Office, World Meteorological Organization, Geneva
Mr. Fredrik Arthur	Counsellor (Development), Permanent Mission of Norway in Geneva
Mr. Peter Walker	Director, Tufts University, Feinstein International Famine Centre
Ms. Nance M. Kyloh	USAID-Permanent Mission of USA in Geneva
Ms. Leslie Norton	Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Canada in Geneva
Mr. Mikael Lindvall	Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Sweden in Geneva
Mr. Mukesh Kapila	Director, Special Programmes, World Health Organization, Geneva
Mr. David Peppiatt	Provention Consortium, Geneva
Mrs. Eva von Oeldreich	Head, Disaster Preparedness and Response, IFRC, Geneva
Mr. Anthony Spalton	Senior Advisor, Disaster Preparedness and Response, IFRC, Geneva
Mr. Masaaki Nakagawa	First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Japan in Geneva
Mr. Pasi Rinne	Senior Policy Advisor, United Nations Environment Programme, Geneva
Mr. Mike Jurvelius	Forest Fire Officer, Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome
Mr. Rene Gomme	Senior Agrometeorologist, Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome
Mr. Henri P. Josserand	Chief, Global Information and Early Warning Service, Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO
Ms. Maryam Golnaraghi	Chief, Natural Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, World Meteorological Organization, Geneva
Mr. Daly Belgasmi	Director, World Food Programme, Geneva Office
Mr. Meinrad Studer	SDC, Policy Coordinator, Bern, Geneva
Ms. Simone Rudder	Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Barbados in Geneva
Ms. Natalie Burke	First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Barbados in Geneva
Mr. Yuri Boychenko	First Counsellor (Humanitarian Affairs and Human Rights), Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation in Geneva
Mrs. Natalia Zolotova	Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation in Geneva
Mr. Hu Bin	Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of China in Geneva
Mr. Everett Ressler	Senior Project Officer, Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF Regional Office for Europe, Geneva
Mrs. Laura M. Joyce	First Secretary, Permanent Mission of South Africa in Geneva
Mr. Carlo Scaramella	Chief, Emergency Preparedness and Response Unit, World Food Programme, Rome
Mr. Francesco Pisano	Head, Earth Observation User Liaison Office, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, Geneva
Mr. Selcuk Unal	First Secretary (Humanitarian and Political Affairs and Human Rights), Permanent Mission of Turkey in Geneva
Mr. Alan Mearns	Coordinator, South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission
Mr. Badaoui Rouhban	Chief, Section for Disaster Reduction, United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization, Paris
Ms. Zenaida Delica Willison	Centre for Disaster Preparedness, Philippines
Prof. Erich Plate	Professor, University of Karlsruhe, Germany
Prof. Vinod Sharma	Chief of Party, Program for Enhancement of Emergency Response (PEER) National Society for Earthquake Technology, Nepal
Dr. Rajib Shaw	Associate Professor Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, Kyoto University
Mr. Karl-Otto Zentel	Director, German Committee for Disaster Reduction, Bonn
Mr. Satoru Nishikawa	Director, Disaster preparedness and International Cooperation for Disaster

	Reduction, Cabinet Office of the Government of Japan
Mrs. Etsuko Tsunozaki	Senior Researcher, Asian Disaster Reduction Centre, Japan
Dr. Debarati Guha-Sapir	Director, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, Brussels
Mr. Amod Mani Dixit	General Secretary & Executive Director National Society for Earthquake Technology - Nepal (NSET)
Mr. Le HuuTi	Economic Affairs Officer, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok
Mr. Pa. Sugong	Head of Disaster Mitigation Division, BAKORNAS, Indonesia
Mr. Andreas Pfaffernoschke	Counsellor (Political Affairs), Permanent Mission of Germany in Geneva
Ms. Yvette Stevens	UN Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator and Director, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Geneva
Ms. Norah Niland	Chief, Policy Development Section, OCHA, Geneva
Mr. Andrew Maskrey	Director, DRU/BCPR, United Nations Development Programme, Geneva
Ms. Jennifer Worrell	Senior Advisor, Disaster Reduction Unit, UNDP, Geneva
Ms. Maria-Olga Gonzalez	Disaster Management Specialist, UNDP, Geneva
Ms. Angelika Planitz	Disaster Reduction Program Specialist, UNDP, Geneva
Mr. Johan G.Goldammer	Director, The Global Fire Monitoring Center, Max Planck Institute for Chemistry, Freiburg University
Prof. Laban Ogallo	Coordinator, IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC), Kenya
Mrs. Brigitte Leoni	Media Relations Officer, ISDR Secretariat
Mrs. Christine Alessi	Finance and Administration Officer, ISDR Secretariat
Mr. John Harding	Programme Officer, ISDR Secretariat
Mr. Praveen Pardeshi	Senior Adviser, ISDR Secretariat
Mrs. Margareta Wahlström	Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, OCHA, New York
Mr. Gerhard Putman-Kramer	Deputy Director, and Chief Emergency Services Branch, OCHA, Geneva
Mr. Mohamed Abchir	Programme Officer, ISDR Secretariat
Mr. John Horekens	Coordinator, World Conference on Disaster Reduction, ISDR Secretariat
Ms. Paola Albrito	Programme Officer, ISDR Secretariat
Mr. Svien Tveitdal	Chief, Disaster Management Branch, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, UNEP, Nairobi
Mr. Norberto Fernandez	Head, UNEP/ Early Warning and Observing Systems Section (DEWA), Nairobi
Mr. Leon Esteban	Disaster Management Specialist, UN HABITAT, Nairobi
Mr. Kenneth Westgate	Regional Disaster Reduction Advisor for Africa, UNDP/BCPR, Geneva
Mr. Philip Dobbie	Director, Dryland Centre, UNDP, Nairobi
Mr. Reid Basher	Senior Officer, UN/ISDR Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning, Bonn
Mrs. Feng Min Kan	Regional Advisor for Africa, ISDR, Nairobi
Mr. Claude Ville De Goyet	Independent Consultant
Mrs. Christina Bollin	GTZ, Germany
Mr. Salvano Briceno	Director ISDR Secretariat, Geneva
Mrs. Helena Molin Valdes	Deputy Director, ISDR Secretariat, Geneva
Mr. Pedro Basabe	Senior Officer, Information and Networks, ISDR Secretariat, Geneva
Mr. Terry Jeggle	Senior Officer, Advocacy, ISDR Secretariat, Geneva
Mr. Haris Sanahuja	Programme Officer, Advocacy, ISDR Secretariat, Geneva
Mr. David Whiting	Director, Fairweather Risk, Ltd, UK
Mr. Brian Lee	Chairman, Advisory Committee for Natural Disaster Reduction, UK
Mrs. Fenella Frost	Programme Officer, DFID, London
Mr. Nigel Adams	Programme Officer, DFID, London

Mr. Ameerah Haq	Humanitarian relief Coordinator, UNAMA Afghanistan
Mr. John Twigg	Researcher, Benfield Hazard Research Centre, London
Mrs. Sylvie Lacroux	Director, UN HABITAT, Geneva
Mrs. Doris Attve	Programme Officer, Sida, Stockholm
Mr. Zoran Milutonovic	Director, Institute of Seismology, Skopje Macedonia
Mrs. Roxanna Shapour	Information Officer, DFID Teheran, Iran
Mr. Jacky Randimbiarison	Executive Secretary CNS, Madagascar
Mr. Mbodou Mahamat	Director Civil Protection, Ministry of Interior, Chad
Dr. Olusegun Edward Ojo	Assistant Director, Relief and Rehabilitation
Mr. Jean Pierre Mints Ndong	Director General Ministry of Social Affairs, Gabon
Mr. Edmond Makimouha	Chef de Service Ministry of Forestry Economy & Environment, Congo, Brazzaville
Mr. Alhassan Nuhu	National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Nigeria
Mr. S.K. Maina	Deputy Secretary Office of the President, Kenya
Mr. Mahboub Maalim	Permanent Secretary Ministry of Special Programmes, Kenya
Mr. Martin Owor	Assistant Commissioner Office of Prime Minister, Uganda
Mr. Benjamin Oghenah	National Focal Point for Disaster Reduction
Mr. Omar Mohamed Ben Cheikh	National Director Ministry of Defence, Comoros
Mr. Abdoulaye Ndiaye	Director Civil Protection Unit, Ministry of the Interior, Senegal
Mr. Benedict Tembo	Chief Editor Zambia Daily Mail, Zambia
Mr. Felix Osike	Head, Political & Conflict Desk The New Vision Newspaper, Uganda
Brig. (Rtd) Joseph Odei	Director National Disaster Mgmt. Office (NADMO), Ghana
Mr. Birama Diarra	Head Meteorological Department, Mali
Ms. Mariama Ousseini	Head, Early Warning Unit CC/SAP, Niger
Mr. Moses Ogola	Economist, Office of the President / Relief & Rehabilitation, Kenya
Ms Rowena Hay	Consultant UMWOTO Pty Ltd, South Africa
Mr. Seth Doe Vordzorgbe	Consultant, Ghana
Mr. Bujar Kapllani	Director, Directorate for Civil Emergency Planning and Coordination, Ministry of Local Government, Albania
Mr. Lambro Duni	Professor/Deputy Director, Seismological Institute, Albania
Mr. Jeremy Collymore	Regional Disaster Coordinator, CDERA, Barbados
Mrs. Rebeca Arias	Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Regional Office, Barbados
Mr. Roger Quiroga	Director, Civil Defense, Prevention and Reconstruction, Bolivia
Mr. Elton Georges	(ex) Head, National Disaster Management Office, British Virgin Islands
Mr. Gutierrez	Deputy Director, General Directorate of the National System for Disaster Prevention and Response, Colombia
Mr. Julio Silva	Director, National Department of Planning, Urban Planning and Environment, Colombia
Mrs. Sandra	Coordinator, sub-regional program, UNDP, Colombia
Mr. David Smith	(ex) Director of Programs, (ex) CEPREDENAC, Costa Rica
Mr. Pascal Girot	Regional Advisor Energy and Environment, UNDP, Bureau for Development Policy, SURF (Sub-Regional Facility), Costa Rica
Mr. Fernando Molino Salazar	Director of International Projects, Civil Defence, Ecuador
Mr. Rodney Martinez	Program Officer, CIIFEN (International Research Centre on El Nino), Ecuador
Mrs. Nino Antadze	Head, UNDP Transition / before OCHA, Georgia
Mr. Ashot Sargsian	Representative, IFRC, Georgia
Mr. Zurab Javakhishvili	Professor/Director, Georgian Seismic Survey, Georgia
Mr. Pridon Sadunishvili	Head, Department for Extraordinary Situations and Civil Safety, MOI, Georgia
Mrs. Barbara Carby	Dr./ Director, Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management, Jamaica
Mr. Roger Quaas	Director, National Disaster Prevention Centre, Mexico
Mr. Marc Bowden	Head, OCHA Policy Department, New York
Mr. Sam Barnes	Head, UNDP/ BCPR Strategic Planning Unit, New York

Mr. John N. Clarke	Humanitarian Liaison Officer, UNDP/ BCPR Strategic Planning Unit, New York
Mr. Manuel Dengo	Chief, DESA, Water, Natural Resources and SIDS Branch, New York
Mrs. Marcia Brewster	Officer, DESA, Water, Natural Resources and SIDS Branch, New York
Mr. Ali Neumann	Advisor, Disaster Prevention Program, SDC, Nicaragua
Mr. Nils Kastberg	Head, UNICEF/ Regional Office LAC, Panama
Mr. Podesta	Director, Civil Defense, INDECI, Peru
Mr. Carlos Baradariaran Chirinos	Director, Training and Education Department, INDECI, Peru
Mrs. Martha Giralda	Curriculum Development Advisor, Training and Education Department, INDECI, Peru
Mr. Alberto Bisbal Sanz	Director, Prevention Department, INDECI, Peru
Mr. Gilberto Romero Zeballos	President, PREDES (NGO), Peru
Mrs. Lucy Harman	Program Coordinator, CARE, Prevention Program in Piura, Peru
Mr. Pedro Ferradas Mannucci	Manager, Regional Office, Disaster Prevention and local governance program, ITDG, Peru
Mrs. Joyce Lance	Representative, South America and DIPECHO Andean Countries, ECHO, Peru
Mr. Juan Carlos Orrego	Regional consultant, independent, Peru
Mrs. Elizabeth Byaruhanga	Officer working with Hespina Rukato, Environment and Tourism, NEPAD, South Africa
Mr. Dawn French	National Disaster Coordinator, National Disaster Office, St. Lucia
Group discussion	Sub-Committee on Disaster Reduction (SDC), US, Washington
Mrs. Helen Wood	Chair, SDC and Group of Earth Observation, NOAA, US, Washington
Mr. Larry Roeder	State Department and NSF, International Working Group of SDC, US, Washington
Mr. Fernando Echavarria	State Department and NSF, International Working Group of SDC, US, Washington
Mr Dennis Wenger	State Department and NSF, International Working Group of SDC, US, Washington
Mrs. Stacey Arnesen	Coordinator, National Library of Medicine, US, Washington
Mr. John Scott	Consultant, National Library of Medicine, US, Washington
Mr. Antonio Jose Rivero-Gonzalez	Director, Organization of Civil Protection and Disaster Management, Venezuela
Mrs. Margaret Arnold	Head, Hazard Management Unit, World Bank, Washington
Mrs. Kari Keipi	Head, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, USA
Mrs. Caroline Clarke	Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, USA
Mr. Steven Bender	Principal Specialist, Natural Hazards Project, Office for Sustainable Development and Environment, Organization of American States, Washington, USA
Mr. Jean-Luc Poncelet	Head, Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief, Pan-American Health Organization, Washington, USA

Annex 4. Inception report

1. Objectives and scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will consider how the Secretariat relates with key-institutional mechanisms in place to help give effect to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in particular with the USG, IATF, ISDR Support Group, Trust Fund, networks of National Platforms and of experts, as well as with its partners with whom it has specific working agreements (partly defined in MoUs (UNDP, OCHA, WMO, UNEP, others):

- The **IATF/DR Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction** is headed by the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and consists of 26 UN, international, regional and civil society organizations and meets twice a year.
- The ISDR is supported by an **ISDR Support Group** (mainly donors but also some developing countries that are strong supporters of ISDR), which also meets on a regular basis, chaired by Switzerland.
- The ISDR Secretariat is funded exclusively from voluntary contributions through the **Trust Fund** for Disaster Reduction.
- The ISDR Secretariat participates in the establishment of **national platforms** for the advancement of sound national and regional disaster reduction policies.
- Most of ISDR Secretariat's activities are undertaken in collaboration with other **partners** (UNDP and OCHA amongst others).
- The ISDR Secretariat has evolved a systematic two-year work-programme to provide the framework for its activities, and a logical framework, which was developed and reviewed in 2004 with DFID.

In reviewing documentation regarding discussions of the current work of ISDR and the Secretariat, a picture emerges of an organization with an extremely broad range of tasks and responsibilities, and an even wider range of demands emerging in the future in implementing the Hyogo Framework. The institutional architecture and stakeholders listed above is complex. This has major implications for the scope of the evaluation. A key initial finding of the evaluation, and indeed of the ISDR Secretariat's own self-assessment, is that the primary challenge to the organization is in structuring and prioritizing its tasks in an appropriate manner. Therefore, we feel it is important already in this inception report to present an initial rough analysis of what ISDR is and what it does, as a way of explaining our interpretation of the scope of the evaluation and the key stakeholders. A systematic evaluation of this structure requires first a disaggregation of these tasks and responsibilities, then to assess what has been appropriate in the past and what may be viable for the future. In doing so, adjustment made to work plans and the structure of the Secretariat because of Task Force requirements, GA resolutions, donor priorities or self-assessment processes will be taken into consideration. From the various planning documents that have evolved over time, and the periodic reports by the ISDR Secretariat, the following tasks and responsibilities appear to be the most repeated categories of work:

Operative Tasks and Responsibilities

International: clearing house activities, flagship publications, coordination of World Conference for Disaster Reduction (WCDR), coordination of reporting to ECOSOC and the GA on the

implementation of the Disaster Reduction Strategy, mainstream DR into various sustainable development policies and settings e.g. SIDS, CSD, UN-Water; development of an international early warning programme, promotion of education and training tools, global public awareness raising, media coverage of DRR, management of Sawakawa Award, resource mobilization.
Regional: clearinghouse activities including CRID information center for LA and the Caribbean regions, production of educational and awareness raising materials, formation of regional coordination platforms on DRR; El Nino International Study Centre in Guayaquil.

National: formation of national platforms, follow up and reporting on the implementation of WCDR, partnership projects e.g. Volcanic risk reduction in Goma, DRC,

Normative Tasks and Responsibilities

International: coordination and advisory support to the IATF/DR, (promoting disaster risk reduction in sustainable development and related areas such as in the UN-Water agenda, reporting on disaster risk reduction annually to the UN General Assembly and to other UN bodies (Commission on Sustainable Development);

Regional: advisory support to regional bodies, collaboration with regional partners in advocacy efforts;

National: advisory support and guidelines to national platforms etc.

Partnership/Networking Tasks and Responsibilities

International: expanding networks and partnerships among the key stake holders e.g. on climate change, early warning, UNFCCC Secretariat and the Vulnerability and Adaptation Resource Group (VARG); coordination with the UN agencies, IFRC, INGOs, scientific and technical communities;

Regional: coordination and collaboration with regional organizations, work and resource sharing with regional UN agencies, NGO networks, regional governmental bodies e.g. AU, CEPREDENAC, NEPAD, CDERA, SOPAC etc.;

National: development of national platforms, dialogue with national policy-makers.

The key overall finding of the Secretariat's own self-assessment and of a strategic planning and management workshop (MacDonald 2003) is that the common denominator of all these tasks and responsibilities and the driving force in prioritization has been in the past that of *gap filling* and responding to demands put on the secretariat by the member states and partners. Furthermore, it is clear that strategic planning and focus is not feasible if gap filling and ad-hoc response to demands is to continue to be the Secretariat's *raison d'être*. A central underlying hypothesis of this evaluation is that gap filling and response to ad-hoc demands, if combined with a strong and steadfast vision can result in added value, but without a strong vision it will lead to fragmentation and weak impact.

In order to build upon earlier analyses of the ISDR Secretariat's attempts to deal with this basic issue, we propose to take our point of departure in assessing the work of the Secretariat in the perspectives of the ultimate (albeit often indirect) target groups of the ISDR, that being *national policy-makers* and *decision-makers regarding major investments* in DRR to see if and how the concept of the ISDR and the work of the Secretariat is viewed. This will involve looking beyond the UN agencies, particularly the ISDR-UNDP-OCHA relationship, and operational partnerships at regional levels that have been emphasized in past reports. Instead of auditing the Secretariat's work-plan completion, we propose to stress what can be learnt from the past five years regarding how the Secretariat's efforts to 'juggle' an over-ambitious and frequently changing –for the above stated reasons- agenda has contributed to implementing the goals of the Yokohama Strategy, the Strategy for a Safer World in the 21st Century, and could best be restructured to support the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

The ISDR Secretariat is funded exclusively from voluntary contributions through the Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction, which has been recognized by the Secretariat as a key obstacle for stability and predictability of their work. Contributions are often small and short term in nature, except for DfID (UK) and Swedish Government funding that are multi-year commitments, and have been both earmarked and unearmarked in nature. A number of planning processes and time frames operate in parallel such as the UN bi-annual budget that requires ISDR to streamline with UNDP, DfID's four years cycle, regional or thematic programmes with specific donor support (Sweden's regional support to LA for over a decade, Germany's support to Africa over three years and early warning programme in Bonn, among others). To some extent, but not exclusively, the funding situation of the Secretariat influenced the focus and structure of the Secretariat such as decentralization to the field, selection of the field locations, selection of partnerships and projects. The Team will analyze the status of the Trust Fund as a major factor in influencing the Secretariat's planning process and effectiveness. At the same time, donor and agency support to the Trust Fund will be evaluated as it relates to commitments to the objectives of the Strategy as well as its management and implementation.

This evaluation is being conducted amid a context of recent and ongoing initiatives to redefine UN structures and goals in DRR, with significant implications for the ISDR Secretariat. We foresee that our informants may be concerned and confused regarding how this evaluation fits into these other recent and parallel efforts. We intend to address this by emphasizing that the scope of the evaluation will encompass the Secretariat's current and potential role among other stakeholders based on empirical data on the views of these stakeholders and a direct focus on ISDR Secretariat functions and products. This will involve assessing the quality of the work of the Secretariat in terms of its added value within its networks, partnerships and a variety of 'gap-filling' roles, i.e., the structures in which it operates. This evaluation will not duplicate the wider initiative that focus more on improved UN system wide capacity to deal with so-called "natural disasters", disaster risk management and reduction and the strengthened architecture of the ISDR system. We do, however, foresee some degree of inevitable overlap, since analysis of the added value of any organization such as the ISDR Secretariat that operates through networks, partnerships and gap filling must be anchored in an understanding of the context and structures in which it operates.

2. Proposed methodology

2.1. Methodological approach

The evaluation methodology will primarily be inductive in that it will draw on in-depth interviews with key actors regarding their perceptions of the quality and relevance of the work of the ISDR Secretariat. In effect, it is in this inductive focus on how the Secretariat is perceived 'from the ground' that will differentiate this evaluation from other ongoing initiatives.

In addition, deductive approaches will be used to assess where current clearinghouse functions appear to be relevant with respect to developments in information technologies and ways of communicating with the stakeholders. This will include a discussion of the changing roles of search engines and portals and gateways (such as ISDR's) and how different media can be best made accessible.

2.2. Data collection tools

Review of documentation: The evaluation will draw heavily on the extensive set of materials that the ISDR Secretariat has developed over the years. Planning documents have been modified by the Secretariat over time to reflect the changing priorities and focus, which will be taken into consideration in the evaluation. Nevertheless, a number of key documents will inform the evaluation such as the logical framework for DfID funding (2002-2005) and the planning documents that were streamlined after the self-assessment and strategic planning and management workshop (MacDonald 2003), the ISDR six-monthly Information Notes and annual SG reports to the UN General Assembly on the Implementation of ISDR, DfID review of regional offices (2004), ISDR, UNDP, OCHA self assessment document, Yokohama Strategy (1994), the Strategy for a Safer World in the 21st Century (1999) and the Hyogo Framework (2005). Documents that inform the work of the regional offices will be reviewed during the field visits. Minutes of the IATF, the ISDR Support Group meetings and six monthly Information Notes prepared by the Secretariat will be reviewed to determine sources of commitments as well as some of the outputs and outcomes. The MoUs signed with a selected number of partners will be reviewed. They are expected to inform the evaluation of the assumptions made from partnerships, and the effectiveness of partnerships/networks in delivering expected results.

In-depth interviews: The primary focus of the evaluation methodology will be in-depth face-to-face and telephone interviews. ISDR Secretariat has been serving and/or networking with more than 4000 contacts to various degrees. While the membership of these groups may overlap, given the global nature of the network there are still a large number of organizations and individuals to be consulted to make the results representative. The Team will establish a list of selected persons from the larger list representing a cross-section of all the stakeholders to interview. In selecting the interviewees a number of criteria will be observed such as geographical distribution, countries disaster risk profile, balance of regular and limited working relationship with ISDR Secretariat, state of national platform, donor and operating member states, policy and technical staff, etc. Where practical, more than one person will be interviewed from each organization or country. The Evaluation Team will also seize the opportunities of important meetings, consultations and workshops to meet and interact with the technical and administrative staff from the member states in the two regions of ISDR regional offices, i.e. Africa and Latin America. This will allow the evaluation to benefit from interviewing personally a variety of national and regional representatives in an inclusive participatory process.

Email survey: In order to solicit as broad a spectrum of feedback as possible, an email survey will be conducted of selected ISDR stakeholders to complement the in-depth interviews. We realize that the level of response to this survey may be low, but given the global nature of ISDR and the limited time available for field missions, this is the only way of reaching the wider stakeholders. A questionnaire is in the process of being prepared for this purpose.

Website and publication analysis: As one of the key tools of the ISDR Secretariat in performing its clearinghouse function, it will be important to look closely at the website and publications. These will be assessed in terms of structure, accessibility, scope and added value. The latter deserves particular attention in light of changing ways the information is gathered and the plethora of other DRR related websites.

Analysis of the Trust Fund: As one of the key determinants of Secretariat's planning process and performance the Trust Fund will be analyzed including the UN bi-annual budget, cash and in kind contributions, nature of earmarking etc.

2.3. Key informants and agencies

The team interprets the mandate of the ISDR as being one of integrating DRR and a culture of prevention in sustainable development efforts that are ultimately led within national structures. For this reason, major attention will be given to soliciting the perspectives of those who should be utilizing the work of the ISDR Secretariat in their regional, national and local efforts. This requires looking beyond the immediate members of the IATF/DR and the ISDR support group to also interview the broader governmental, civil society and private sector actors that would appear to be the ultimate target group of ISDR efforts.

At the same time, we are aware that the room for manoeuvre of the Secretariat is related to the wishes of current and prospective donors and the nature of its collaboration with other UN agencies and other DRR actors in Geneva and elsewhere. The evaluation will gather these perspectives, while encouraging informants to reflect on how this ongoing debate ultimately influences the ability of the ISDR Secretariat, and indeed the ISDR efforts as a whole, to attain stated goals.

A representative cross-section of informants will be selected from broadly the following groups : IATF and its Working Groups, member states, UN agencies, INGOs, CSOs, IFIs, Inter-Governmental regional bodies, missions in Geneva and New York, National Platforms, scientific and technical networks, ISDR Support Group, WCDR Drafting Group. In addition, the Team may consult independent experts, academics and practitioners with extensive experiences in the subject of DRR.

2.4. Organization of the Review

OCHA's Evaluation and Studies Unit (ESU) acts directly under the authority of the USG for Humanitarian Affairs to ensure that the terms of reference for this evaluation are dealt with appropriately and meets professional evaluation standards. As a guide to professional standards, OCHA is using the ALNAP Quality Proforma, which the Team has experience in using.

The evaluation is also supported by a donor advisory group who will remain in dialogue with the Team; discussing the Inception Report, as well as the findings of the report and the Action Plan to stem from the recommendations of the evaluation. This Group has already commented on the ToR, and a discussion on this Inception Report is planned (see timetable section).

The ISDR Secretariat will provide logistical support to the evaluation, assist in gathering all relevant background information, setting up relevant appointments and coordinating/organizing the two field visits of the team. The ESU evaluation manager at OCHA-Geneva will follow the evaluation process closely, prepare all necessary documentation in collaboration with the ISDR Secretariat, request the Secretariat to set up all necessary appointments and schedules, stay in regular contact with the evaluation team for the duration of the evaluation exercise, and review, disseminate, collate comments on the draft report.

The evaluation manager will consult with main actors during the process either through advisory group of donors, of recipient countries, of IATF, UN agencies etc., as appropriate.

2.5. Key evaluation questions (see also ToR in Annex X)

The following crosscutting questions will form the focus of the evaluation:

What is the relevance and viability of the ISDR Secretariat's mandate in the view of its past performance;
What conceptual and operational gaps have appeared in the mandate and structure of the ISDR in general and the Secretariat in particular vis-à-vis other key actors; and
If and how the ISDR Secretariat should be restructured to adapt to current challenges, especially as defined in the Hyogo Framework.

Key evaluation questions will be informed by the Strategy and Secretariat plans, and formulated to assess the effectiveness of the ISDR Secretariat in the implementation of its functions and responsibilities, which are formulated in the ToR as:

To serve as the focal point within the United Nations system for the coordination of strategies and programs for natural disaster reduction, and to ensure synergy between disaster reduction strategies and those in the socio-economic and humanitarian fields;
To support the inter-agency task force for disaster reduction (IATF/DR) in the development of policies on natural disaster reduction;
To promote a worldwide culture of reduction of the negative effects of natural hazards, through advocacy campaigns;
To serve as an international information clearing house for the dissemination and exchange of information and knowledge on disaster reduction strategies; and
To backstop the policy and advocacy activities of national committees for natural disaster reduction.

Since the evaluation period is too short to verify the full impact from these tasks, it will be important to gain an understanding of how key actors view the extent to which the ISDR has performed under these broad areas of work. While the evaluation will be retrospective, the evaluation questions will also aim to gain perspectives on the prospective role of ISDR Secretariat in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework. The recommendations will take into account the structure of the Hyogo Framework as its basis, i.e.:

Ensuring the DRR is a national/local priority emphasizing institutions and governance
Identification of disaster risks and early warning
Knowledge, innovation and education
Reducing underlying risk factors
Strengthened disaster preparedness for response

2.6. Performance criteria

The main focus of past reviews and assessments has been on the quality of the outputs of the ISDR Secretariat. The overall objective of the evaluation suggests that the current evaluation pays primary attention to outcomes and impacts. However, it may be difficult to draw firm conclusions regarding outcomes and impacts if these have not been monitored in the past. The short timeframe of the evaluation may mean that the team will in some aspects direct its efforts toward better defining the output/impact criteria and helping the ISDR in its efforts to consider and design enhanced systems to monitor these aspects of performance.

Outcome performance criteria: The outcomes will be determined by who is engaged in ISDR efforts, who is not, and who is searching for and accessing the policy support, knowledge and information that the ISDR Secretariat is providing and who is not. The goals of the Hyogo Framework and the Framework for Guidance and Monitoring of Risk Reduction will be the

points of departure for assessing whether those who need to learn from and access Secretariat outputs and partnerships actually do so and if not, why. The weakest aspect of much of past and prevailing approaches to DRR is that of transcending tendencies to ‘preach to the converted’ in the immediate DRR community. The Hyogo Framework constitutes a powerful call to create a far stronger dialogue with a far broader range of stakeholders. The evaluation will assess outcomes in terms of success in creating a dialogue with leading actors in sustainable development, humanitarian response and (above all) the political decision-making that is required for overcoming the institutional intransigence that has hindered the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy.

Impact performance criteria: It will be very difficult to obtain reliable primary data on the impact of the work of the ISDR Secretariat in terms of actual reduction of disaster risk. The evaluation, however, can contribute to the development of a framework so that impact can be monitored in the future, and to highlight, at the very least, the importance of focusing attention on the impacts upon which the success of the Hyogo Framework can be built.

3. Issues to be studied

Overall Evaluation Objective

To assess the effectiveness of the ISDR Secretariat in meeting its functions and responsibilities in line with its initial mandates, how these have evolved and presenting recommendations for the future role of the ISDR in light of the study’s findings, other pertinent proposals, and the Hyogo Framework for Action.

In continuation of the preceding “Yokohama” (1994) and “A Safer World for the 21st Century” (1999) Strategies the Hyogo Framework calls upon member states, regional organizations and international organizations to undertake a set of tasks to build resilience of communities and nations against disasters. Compared with its predecessors the Hyogo framework is even more comprehensive. It will be necessary to look at past performance of the ISDR Secretariat and progress vis-à-vis previous strategies in order to define appropriate roles, focus areas and modalities for the future. The Hyogo framework explicitly addresses tasks of ISDR, which focus upon relatively narrow clearinghouse and information functions that receive primary emphasis in the current ISDR-work-plan. However, these are expected to support a much broader agenda, which threatens to (again) fall between the mandates of different UN agencies and which ultimately depend on the commitment and support from national policy-makers. Under these circumstances, it is important at the outset to clarify how ambitious the ISDR Secretariat could or should aim to be. The MacDonald report argued forcefully for a paring-down of ambition levels, whereas the Hyogo Framework sets even grander objectives. The Hyogo Framework does not specify in detail the tasks of the Secretariat in implementation, but runs the risk of creating pressures for an unrealistic scaling-up if other key actors do not step in to fill the gaps that will almost inevitably emerge. The choice of issues to be studied has been made in order to provide a background analysis to support efforts to focus on what the Secretariat could or should strive to accomplish in the coming years.

The ToR present three areas of focus:

Examine the **effectiveness** of the Secretariat in **carrying out its functions and responsibilities** and in **achieving its declared objectives**

- *How effectively has the Secretariat fulfilled its functions and roles in DRR/M in doing advocacy campaigns, serving as focal point within the UN system, supporting the IATF in the development of policies, serving as international information clearing house and backstopping of national committees?
- *How has the ISDR Secretariat learnt from and utilized recommendations from previous studies and donor reviews to date? Have these recommendations been translated in changes in the work program and have changes been made to adjust to changing realities in field of disaster reduction?
- *Is ISDR Secretariat's current funding appropriate and in line with its mandate? What strategies have been adopted to promote longer-term financial sustainability of the Secretariat's program and how effective have they been? How has co-funding of activities with agencies and countries, and public-private partnerships added resources to the limited budget of the Secretariat?
- *What has been the use made of the Trust Fund and how strengthen its use to increase the resource base?

Approach: The team will take its point of departure in the logical framework (2002/2005) to assess the Secretariat's effectiveness, while stressing analysis of whether the work plan embodied in the Hyogo Framework is an appropriate basis for achieving the declared objectives. In doing so, we will also consult earlier and broader documents such as the Framework for Action (2001) and take into consideration the evolution of the work-plan of the Secretariat over time.

Outstanding issues: The logical framework (2002/2005) stresses the communication, information dissemination and advocacy role of ISDR (supported by a few flagship publications and the web site) in building a global process of change. The evaluation will reflect on the Secretariat's restructuring of its website and publication strategy in light of the changing ways that information is communicated, accessed and used in advocacy and policy formation.

Analyze **how effectively the secretariat relates to other parts and stakeholders of the ISDR:** IATF, member states/national constituencies, regional bodies, technical networks, NGOs and how effectively it works with partners with whom it has institutional arrangements (e.g. MoUs), i.e. OCHA, UNDP, WMO, PAHO, and UNEP

- *How effectively has the ISDR Secretariat's work contributed to integrating disaster risk reduction and "the Strategy" into UN agencies approaches and programs, international policy initiatives (sustainable development, climate change, SIDS, humanitarian agenda, etc.), and into regional and national policies.
- *What has been the ISDR Secretariat's role in supporting the development of a network of National Platforms and as how effective have these platforms been perceived?
- *How does the Secretariat get guidance from and provide support to the USG?
- *What has been the role of the ISDR Secretariat in supporting the IATF process in its deliberations (see footnote 1) and how has the ISDR Secretariat made use of the guidance provided by IATF?
- *How does the ISDR Secretariat select implementing partners and has been interacting with what it calls its main partners (OCHA, UNDP, WMO, PAHO, UNEP)? How are the instruments in place (MoUs or other agreements or joint activities) used where available? Is the division of labor clear and effective? Are these partnerships assessed for effectiveness and delivery? Are they the most effective mechanisms –cost, impact)?

Approach: The team will review the modalities and effectiveness of currently existing horizontal cooperation-mechanisms at different levels (starting from a review of relevant MoUs, ToRs, notes and reports) and also look at mechanisms for “upward”-accountability of the Secretariat and how in turn oversight of the Secretariat is currently exercised.

An underlying question that the evaluation will ask is that of ‘whose Secretariat’ the ISDR Secretariat is striving to be. The evaluation will unpack the multiple accountabilities of the Secretariat to the IAT/DR, the ISDR Support Group, and the USG for Humanitarian Affairs, to donors and to member states and national platforms. This mapping exercise will be used to assess how priorities are formed and will provide a basis for a formative assessment of how the Secretariat has been able to maintain its focus on the Yokohama Strategy and most recently to the Hyogo Framework.

Outstanding issues: In order for ISDR to achieve its objectives, the team may find that there are key actors with which ISDR should have institutional arrangements but currently does not. This will involve looking critically at whether or not ISDR has been able to transcend the tendency in DRR to be satisfied with ‘preaching to the converted’. The obvious question is how formative the evaluation should be in exploring a more appropriate scale of networking.

It is proposed that the team will make special efforts to look ‘out of the box’ by focusing on two cases of where other actors have a major role in DRR but have not had extensive collaboration with ISDR; to analyze why this has not occurred and how ISDR could better relate to mainstream development agendas. One case could be to look within the UN system, e.g., at FAO and/or WFP and issues related to livelihoods and food security. Another could be to look closer at an IFI that is heavily involved in DRR.

Review and assess the **value-added, relevance and appropriateness** of the ISDR Secretariat’s work-program, its strategic orientation and its functional approach in performing its tasks, including the value-added of innovative partnerships

*To what extent is Secretariat’s work seen as beneficial and bringing additional value by national and regional stakeholders, UN agencies, civil society and donors? Are its outputs and services being used and to what extent and for what purpose?

*What is the value-added of the Secretariat’s work in terms of interaction of regional / national offices with stakeholders of DRRM, of consultation with national governments, of outreach programs?

*To what extent are the objectives and strategies of the ISDR Secretariat still relevant? Is ISDR Secretariat’s strategic plan appropriate for contributing to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action? What changes / adjustments if any in the Secretariat’s work program need to be made in the light of the Framework?

Approach: ISDR is in many respects a network of networks, which naturally draws attention to the question of added value. It is also important in this evaluation to distinguish between working through networks and carrying out specific activities for networking various communities of DRR. In an initial review of ISDR documentation, it is not clear, for example, what the specific role of the Secretariat is in its partnerships at regional level and how ‘networking’ responsibilities are divided.

Given the complexity and breadth of current and possible future roles and tasks it is important to review the appropriateness of the Secretariat's current engagement in the development of awareness tools. While it may be difficult to gather firm data on what is the specific added value of ISDR in the production of such concrete outputs it may be even more important to review whether and in what way such engagement in implementation may impact upon its more generic policy-development, advocacy and networking functions.

Outstanding issues: The debate and critique concerning limited implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and the concerns that have been expressed about how to implement more effectively the Hyogo Framework stress the overriding importance of establishing political will. Many have pointed to the need to build this will through developing incentives to maintain political will at international, national and local levels. The ISDR Secretariat's ultimate objective in its clearinghouse, normative and partnership functions is to contribute to developing and maintaining this political will. Its public consultations and the WCDR have resulted in an array of suggestions regarding *what* needs to be done, but further work is needed in concretely defining *how* to proceed. The tsunami disaster has profoundly affected the scale of the arena for DRR, but the underlying issues remain the same. We propose to use this evaluation to provide concrete substance to inform the discussion of how the implementation of the Hyogo Framework can be supported in the future by creating political will and the incentives that underpin its sustainability.

4. Plan of Work

Matrix for the Key Tasks to be undertaken by the Evaluation Team

Key Tasks	Proposed Method	Anticipated time requirement + time frame	Lead + additional expertise if required
Map the documents to review and share among the team members	Discussions with ISDR staff; review of website, library and relevant files	2-4 March 2 days	YA
Determine evaluation methodology	Review of the ToR and key documents; consultations with the ISDR staff and the ESU	7-10 March 3+2 days travel to Geneva 3 days	IC YA
Map the stakeholders	Discussions with ISDR staff, particularly the regional advisors, and with the ESU	14-25 March 2 days	YA
Complete the Inception Report describing methodology and approach	Review of documents, interpretation of the ToR, discussions with ISDR and ESU	14-21 March 5 days 2 days 1 day	YA IC AG
Seek donor feedback on inception report	Circulate the inception report, meeting with the donor advisory group	24 March 1day	YA
Establish implementation of and modifications to ISDR Secretariat plans, determine outputs since establishment of ISDR	Review key planning documents, six-monthly Information Notes, annual SG reports, DFID review of regional offices (2004), ISDR, UNDP, OCHA self assessment documents, Yokohama Strategy (1994), Strategy for a Safer World in the 21 st Century (1999), Hyogo Framework (2005), National Platforms	14-25 March 2days 2days 2days	YA AG IC
Establish interview lists	Consultation with the ISDR, including the regional advisors for the regional	14-21 March 1day	YA

	lists, review Kobe participants, IATF members, national platforms and country report lists	1day	AG
Develop questionnaires for the e-mail interviews	Interpret the ToR, review work plans	21-23 March 2days 1 day	AG IC
Circulate questionnaire	Compile lists, coordinate distributing through e mail, where not possible by fax	25-30 March 2 days	AG
Determine profile, outputs and views of ISDR staff	Interview ISDR staff, including the regional advisors	28-31 March 2+2 days travel	IC
Determine effectiveness in partnership with UN agencies	In-depth interviews with UN agencies, in Geneva, NY , Nairobi and Rome, review MoUs	21 march-5 April 6+1days travel to Rome 2 days NY 1day in Gnv.(travel above)	YA AG IC
In-depth interviews in Washington to determine effectiveness in advocacy and value added with IFIs, US institutions, regional entities	Interview WBank, IADB, PAHO, OAS, NGOs and representatives of US national organizations	28 -31 March 2+1 days travel to Washington	AG
In-depth interviews in London for lessons learnt from regional evaluations, review of funding status; and value added in DRR	Interview Dfid and selected technical people based in UK	April (to be determined) 1+1 day travel to London	IC
Determine effectiveness of advocacy and impact in DRR with member states in min. 3 continents and regional organizations	In-depth regional interviews in Africa, Asia and Americas; visit minimum 3 countries and participate in regional meetings for this purpose	15-230 April (to be determined) 3+2 days each	YA/AG/IC
Determine effectiveness of communication, advocacy and impact in DRR with member states, technical networks, NGOs;	Analyze questionnaire results; In-depth and telephone interviews with national organizations, technical experts, IATF members, donor support group, etc	15-25 April 6 days 5 days 3 days	AG IC YA
Report writing	analyze and consolidate information	25 April-9 May 8 days 4 days 4 days	IC AG YA
Draft Report disseminated	Disseminated by ESU Task Manager; commented by ISDR Secretariat, USG / ASG, OCHA-ESU	9-13 May	CH
Discussion meeting with Donor Advisory Group	Presentation and discussion	10-11 May 1+2days travel to Gnv. 1day	IC YA
Discussion meeting with ISDR Support Group	Presentation and discussion	12-13 May 1 day (above travel) 1day	IC YA
Finalize draft Report	Review and incorporate comments by USG / ASG, ESU, Donor Advisory Group and ISDR Support Group and send out to IATF/DR	17-18 May 2day 1day	IC YA
Presentation and discussion of the findings to the 11 th IATF/DR meeting in Geneva	Presentation and discussion, informal meetings with members of IATF for feedback	25 May 1 day 1day	IC YA
Finalize Report	incorporate comments on draft report into the final report and	15 May-15 June 05 4+2days travel to Gnv.	IC

	follow-up discussions; team work in Gnv.	4+2days travel to Gnv. 2days	AG YA
Debriefing key stakeholders* Workshop: Geneva	OCHA-ESU as facilitator * Key stakeholders should include USG / ASG, ISDR Secretariat Senior Management, Representatives of Donor Advisory Group, ISDR Support Group, IATF,	June (date to be determined) 2days (travel above) 2days	IC YA

5. Reporting / Deliverables

Reports are to be kept as concise as possible:

- Brief evaluation inception report (around 10 pages), outlining the key issues to be covered and the proposed methodology to cover these issues; the report should also include a stakeholder mapping;
- Draft evaluation report of max 15'000 words and should include:
 - *Executive Summary of max.2 pages*
 - Main findings and performance assessment with respect to the criteria and key issues stated in section 3.
 - Recommendations (max. 15, with proposed responsibilities and timeframe addressing proposed improvements matching with the priorities of the Hyogo Framework For Action and taking into account the recommendations of further forward-looking studies.

It is expected, unless otherwise agreed with the consultants, that the report will closely follow the outline of the terms of reference, including a short background.

- Final Report (same format and length as draft report) after agreement with ESU, with additional relevant material annexed as required.

6. Timetable

The three consultants assigned to this evaluation will collectively provide the equivalent of 110 working days (not including travel time), primarily focusing on data collection in Geneva and New York, visits and data collection in locations to be determined in Asia, Africa and Latin America, as well as interviews with relevant stakeholders in person or via phone/e-mail, as appropriate. The evaluation commenced on the first week of March and a draft report will be submitted the latest on 9 May 2005.

Inception Report / Briefings with ISDR Secretariat and ESU	7-10 March 2005
Inception Report submitted and circulated to ESU, ISDR Secretariat and donor advisory group and feedback received	15-21 March 2005
Inception report discussed with donor advisory group	24 March 2005

Key informant interviews in London and Washington (1and 2 days each)	March-April 2005 (dates to be determined)
Interviews with ISDR staff and key informants in Geneva by the team leader	29-31 March 2005
Desk Review; interviewing key informants by phone/email	March – April 2005
Key Informant Interviews in New York & Geneva	21 March- 15 April 2005
Key Informant Interviews plus one country visit in the Region: Africa, Asia, Latin America, (5 days each including travel)	April 2005 (dates to be determined)
Report writing	25 April-9 may 2005
Submission of the Draft Report (to be disseminated to ISDR Secretariat, USG / ASG, OCHA-ESU for comments by ESU Task Manager)	9 May 2005 (comments to consultants due by 13 th of May 2005)
Discussion meeting with Donor Advisory Group	10 th -11 th May 2005
Discussion meeting with ISDR Support Group	12 th -13 th May 2005
Finalize draft report taking in account comments by USG / ASG, ESU, Donor Advisory Group and ISDR Support Group and send out to IATF/DR	17 th – 18 th May 2005
Presentation and discussion of the findings to the 11 th IATF/DR meeting in Geneva	25 May 2005
Final Report Writing (including incorporation of comments on draft report into the final report and follow-up discussions) Evaluation Team works together in Geneva (6 days each including travel)	15 May-15 June 05
Debriefing key stakeholders* Workshop: Geneva (2 days) * Key stakeholders should include USG / ASG, ISDR Secretariat Senior Management, Representatives of Donor Advisory Group, ISDR Support Group, IATF, OCHA-ESU as facilitator	June 2005 (date to be determined)
Total of working days by 3 consultants (excluding travel)	110 days

7. Action points

- Regional advisors of the ISDR Secretariat in Nairobi and San Jose to facilitate meeting of the evaluators with the key regional stakeholders. It has been agreed that in Africa ISDR regional office will organise a meeting of the countries with, and/or interested in establishing National Platforms on the third week of April. In Latin America, the regional office will arrange access to one of the regional meetings planned by other stakeholders (e.g. CEPREDENAC and PAHO) for the second half of April.

- During the consultation meeting in Latin America translation between English and Spanish will be needed. This service is expected to be funded by the evaluation, unless the organisers are able to provide a translator.