

IDRC Davos 2006 Declaration

Participants' self-commitment for action

We, the 900 participants of IDRC DAVOS 2006, declare our self-commitment and will to actively support and implement the conference recommendations on a regular basis in our daily work and communicate these recommendations to the wider community. Hereby, we call upon the international community to join us in this effort. Our declaration aims at drawing attention to the issues listed below.

Preamble

The IDRC Davos 2006 Conference, a multicultural, inter- and transdisciplinary gathering with 900 participants from almost one hundred countries, supported the objectives of disaster risk management as outlined in the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: "Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters"*. Special attention was given to the implementation in the community - at the "last mile"

The Conference provided a forum for decision makers, scientists and practitioners to exchange ideas on how to cope with disasters and risks using state-of-the-art methodologies.

The conference discussed:

1. Risks related to natural hazards and technological failures, as well as emerging human-induced risk factors such as pandemics, terrorism or climate change, in a truly integrated and participative approach.
2. Measures to identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.
3. The need to prioritize the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into development policies, to transfer the knowledge, and develop the technology and education with the involvement of the communities at risk to build a culture of safety.

General Findings and Recommendations

Integrated risk management and sustainable development:

- The conference reinforced the idea that to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), disaster risk reduction has to become an important and comprehensive part of the whole planning process for poverty reduction, food and water security, education and health – thus risk management must become an important part of national policies and strategies.
- We need to adopt an integrative, multi-disciplinary approach and bring representatives from the public and private sector, NGOs and academia to “the table” to discuss disaster prevention, mitigation, response and recovery.
- Disaster risk management has to concentrate more pro-actively on prevention and preparedness to reduce an adverse socioeconomic impact on the MDG. Rapid intervention and response during and carefully planned recovery after a disaster may limit subsequent losses and damages. Disaster risk management should be viewed as a process rather than a solution.
- Decision-makers have to include disaster risk management in their national planning and budgeting process, rather than waiting till disasters strike before they react. Institutional capacity building needs to be matched up with human capacity building, so as to have strong and efficient institutional mechanisms and as well as strong and efficient people in developing areas who are empowered to deal with disaster events themselves, before assistance comes their way.
- In addition to focussing on basic needs (food, water, shelter), infrastructure and environment, it is important to have preparedness plans addressing people’s social, psychological and emotional needs, thus involving those people directly affected.
- National strategies that integrate all types of risks and measures are needed. Disaster risk management and natural resource management have to go hand in hand.
- Presently available tools for hazard analysis, vulnerability assessment, risk appraisal, tolerability and acceptability judgments shall be used for a comprehensive disaster risk management to reduce risks and to build the resilience of the community. There is further need to enhance the tools for their practicality, especially for vulnerability assessments and priority setting in risk reduction measures.
- In designing community and rural risk management plans, the focus must be to protect people, as well as livestock and other agricultural assets, in order to preserve livelihoods, and reduce poverty, hunger, water shortage and the spread of zoonotic diseases.

Gender and disasters:

- Gender issues are an integral part of disaster risk reduction and it is imperative that the specific needs and contributions of both men and women are taken into consideration in practice, science, evaluation, policy and decision making.
- Communities at risk can benefit tremendously by using women and children as a change agent. We need to capitalize the potential of women and children and their effectiveness to contribute to the reduction of disaster risks.
- The specific vulnerability of women and children in disasters has to be taken into account. This requires awareness raising and capacity building of planners, decision makers and practitioners.
- Collected data needs to be separated into categories of different gender and age groups before being analyzed.

Environmental vulnerability

- Environmental degradation, whether creeping change or acute emergencies, poses a grave risk to human communities.
- The management of ecosystem services should be recognized as an integral part of disaster risk management.
- Estimates of cost-effectiveness are an important tool in deciding on the mix of using nature with its potential and man-made eco-engineered or technical disaster reduction measures.
- Some disaster reduction and recovery efforts can have adverse environmental consequences – these should be avoided as much as possible.
- Ecosystem services based management, environmental engineering solutions, mitigation of greenhouse gases, climate change adaptation and integrated water resource and catchment area management all support the goals of disaster risk reduction.

Research, education, awareness and capacity building

- We believe that education for disaster reduction should form an integral part of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014).
- It is necessary to build the ability to reduce losses, as well as the capacity to respond to, and to recover effectively from extreme events when they do, inevitably, occur.
- A better working relationship between the scientific community and end-users, be they mitigators, planners, educators, communicators or responders, is of prime importance. The end-user's needs must be better articulated and the knowledge management improved. A scientific approach and international collaboration are encouraged.

- The availability of temporally and spatially accurate, relevant and usable information is essential to all aspects of disaster reduction. The development and enhancement of processes and infrastructure to acquire, manage, and share information across sectors, combined with the ability to make well founded decisions will substantially increase the efficiency and effectiveness of all aspects of disaster risk reduction.
- Knowledge transfer and capacity building shall contribute substantially to disaster risk reduction.
- Concern for heritage, both tangible and intangible, should be incorporated into disaster risk reduction strategies and plans, which are strengthened through attention to cultural attributes and traditional knowledge.

Terrorism and human security

- Transnational terrorism has developed into a worldwide threat. Community based disaster risk reduction strategies have to take this threat into account.
- As poverty, lack of good governance and economic and political instability are fertile ground for terrorism to flourish, this has to be addressed in a way so as to encompass its comprehensive dimension.
- Close international cooperation and mechanisms for forecasting, early warning and information exchange are needed to cope with this threat.

Regional dimensions

- Regional variations in disaster risk management awareness and abilities, in vulnerability and resilience are a fact. The unique needs, challenges and existing capacities of China, Central Asia and Africa were highlighted throughout the conference.
- Participants from Africa (annex 1) took the opportunity to advance plans for promoting mutual interest and cooperation in disaster risk reduction for safer, more disaster resilient communities and issued position papers outlining details in this regard.
- For the Central Asian delegation, adopting the principles of the integrated water resources management and increasing the activities of coordination at the national, interstate and global level will offer a good chance to reduce vulnerability. Actions should give priority to the human needs for water and should include the principals of the integral risk management for natural and man-made hazards (annex 2).
- Indigenous knowledge pertaining to disaster reduction and prevention should be assessed, widely developed and improved technologically, to enhance the traditional capacities of developing countries to deal with natural or man-made disasters.

Outreach Process

Participants are invited to report on their continuing activities and findings and to share their experiences with IDRC Davos. Periodic progress reports and assessments will be made available on the conference website www.idrc.info. This information will also be introduced to the UN-ISDR system.

Acknowledgement

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Davos, Oktober, 2006

IDRC Davos 2006
Declaration Committee

Next IDRC Conferences

2007: IDRC Harbin China, August 21 – 25, 2007

2008: IDRC Davos, August 25 – 29, 2008

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