

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

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FOURTEENTH

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL CONGRESS

GENEVA, 5–24 MAY 2003

ABRIDGED FINAL REPORT WITH RESOLUTIONS

DPM



WMO-No. 960

7.4 DISASTER REDUCTION ACTIVITIES (agenda item 7.4)

Cooperation with ISDR and other organizations

7.4.1 Congress noted that IDNDR was over in December 1999 with success in achieving substantial progress in natural disaster reduction at all levels. Congress expressed its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the leading role played by WMO in support of IDNDR efforts. Congress was informed that an IDNDR Programme Forum had been successfully held in July 1999 as the consolidation and closing event of the Decade under the title "A Safer World in the Twenty-first Century: Disaster and Risk Reduction." Congress noted with satisfaction that WMO and UNESCO, as the two principal United Nations agencies concerned with the scientific and technological aspects of disaster reduction, had convened the Subforum on Science and Technology in Support of Natural Disaster Reduction as a special contribution to the Forum.

7.4.2 Congress was informed that the IDNDR had been succeeded by a new substantive programme, the ISDR, that included an Inter-Agency Task Force and an Inter-Agency Secretariat. The main objectives of ISDR were to enable communities to become resilient to natural hazards and to proceed from an approach of protection against the hazards to the management of the risk. The primary function of the Task Force would be to devise strategies and policies for natural disaster reduction, to identify gaps in policies and programmes, to convene expert meetings on those issues, to ensure complementary action by agencies, and to provide guidance for ISDR Secretariat.

7.4.3 Congress noted that WMO had been designated as a member of the Task Force. Congress also noted that the Secretary-General had taken various initiatives on the structure of the ISDR to ensure a prominent role for science and technology and the operational activities of NMHSs in the implementation of the Strategy.

7.4.4 Congress was informed that the Task Force, as part of its Framework of Action, had established four working groups. Working Group 1 on Climate and Disasters, chaired by WMO, had taken over the responsibilities of the United Nations Task Force on *El Niño* with an expanded mandate to consider all climate-related aspects of disasters. Working Group 2 on Early Warnings was chaired by UNEP, while Working Group 3 on Risk, Vulnerability and Impact Assessment was chaired by UNDP. The Global Fire Monitoring Centre at Freiburg, Germany chaired Working Group 4 on Wildland Fires. Congress noted that WMO actively participated in all Working Groups and encouraged Members to contribute to the work of ISDR. It agreed that there would be considerable advantages for NMHSs in developing close relationships with the groups, including joint projects at the regional level to mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

7.4.5 Congress was pleased to note the statement by the ISDR representative that close collaboration on partnership had been established between the two organizations in scientific and technical areas of natural disaster reduction activities. Congress noted with appreciation that the role of WMO had been well recognized as a key contributor in the field of natural disaster reduction, through its monitoring and forecasting activities and the distribution of early warnings. Congress also noted the contribution of WMO to the Task Force working groups and its participation in the preparation of a publication entitled *Living with Risk*, in the preparation of the Early Warning Conferences, as well as the WMO contribution to WSSD. It noted with appreciation the support of ISDR to a new WMO programme on natural disaster prevention and mitigation that would further enhance the collaboration between WMO and ISDR.

7.4.6 Congress recalled the important role that WMO had played in the work of the United Nations Task Force on *El Niño* in reviewing the effects of the 1997-1998 *El Niño* event and in the implementation of United Nations resolutions on that subject. Congress agreed that WMO should continue to take a central role in providing scientific guidance and technical support in the implementation of United Nations resolutions relating to the *El Niño* phenomenon. In that context, Congress noted with appreciation that the Government of Ecuador and WMO had concluded a Memorandum of Cooperation to establish the International Research Centre on *El Niño* in Guayaquil, as a regional and international facility to foster research on *El Niño*. Congress encouraged Members to participate actively in the activities of the Centre.

7.4.7 Congress noted the important role played by WMO in WSSD where the issue of disaster management had been a key topic in its main outcomes. Natural disaster prevention and mitigation were included in WSSD's Plan of Implementation as essential elements for a safer world in the twenty-first century. The Summit agreed that actions were required at all levels to improve surface-based monitoring and increase the use of satellite data to improve early warning systems and prediction of extreme weather events. The Congress urged its Members to participate actively in the implementation of those actions.

7.4.8 Congress was pleased to note the information provided by Japan that the Government of Japan would host a conference, tentatively entitled World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in January 2005 in Kobe, Japan.

7.4.9 Congress noted that the World Bank launched the ProVention Consortium, a partnership between public and private organizations that was aimed at helping developing countries to cope with disasters. It also noted that WMO was a member of the Consortium and was represented in the Consortium Steering Committee. The Consortium

had been hosted by the World Bank in New York. However, as of 2003, it was hosted by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Geneva. Congress felt that more active collaboration between WMO and the Consortium would be useful for more effective implementation of natural disaster reduction activities by WMO.

7.4.10 Congress was informed of the international activities and efforts in the field of landslide research and landslide risk management and on the establishment of the International Consortium on Landslides. Congress requested the Secretary-General to maintain WMO's high profile and leading role in major aspects of natural disaster reduction including landslides and welcomed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between WMO and the International Consortium on Landslides. Congress requested the Secretary-General to ensure provision of appropriate advice to NMHSs in order to enable them to respond adequately and in a timely manner to national demands for services related to landslide prevention and mitigation.

WMO activities in the area of natural disaster prevention and mitigation

7.4.11 Congress noted that WMO played a significant role in international disaster reduction activities through the actions taken within its major scientific and technical programmes, namely WWW, AMP, WCP, HWRP and AREP. Those Programmes were particularly important in contributing to global capabilities in the detection, forecasting and early warning of hazards, and in providing effective means and procedures to minimize their adverse consequences through the application of science and technology.

7.4.12 Congress was pleased to note that the WWW Programme had promoted upgrading of infrastructures to exchange real-time data, forecasts and warnings for the public and the international community. Through its system of RSMCs, WWW provided weather forecasts, early warnings and advisories on tropical cyclones and other severe events. As a part of WWW, the TCP coordinated activities at the international, regional and national levels, to provide upgraded and more effective warnings of tropical cyclones and associated floods and storm surges, and to strengthen related community preparedness through appropriate guidance.

7.4.13 Congress noted with appreciation that PWS, as part of the AMP Programme provided assistance to NMHSs to develop their capability to communicate adequate warning messages to both the public and the emergency management community. That assistance had been provided through training activities and the publication of guidelines on media issues, the use of Internet and the use of new technologies and research.

7.4.14 Congress was informed that the WCP provided assistance to Members through the Climate

System Monitoring Project of the WCDMP at the global and regional levels. Information was distributed via the Internet and through various publications. Congress noted with appreciation that the WCP contributed through the Climate Change Detection Project to the establishment of a climate early warning system with special emphasis on climate extremes and indices. Congress learnt that the WCP also provided assistance to countries through the CLIPS project of WCASP for the application of climate information. Congress was pleased to note the initiatives taken by CCI to provide seasonal to inter-annual climate predictions based on the research carried out within WCRP and its CLIVAR project.

7.4.15 Congress noted that, as part of AREP, the WWRP contributed to promote research on cost-effective and improved techniques for the forecast of high-impact weather phenomena such as tropical cyclones, sand and dust storms, and heavy rainfall that could provoke severe flooding.

7.4.16 Congress noted with satisfaction that HWRP promoted, through the provision of technical guidance and the establishment of technical cooperation, projects, flood risk assessment and forecasting water-related hazards with focus on major floods and droughts. To that effect, HWRP and the Global Water Partnership launched a joint project, the Associated Programme on Flood Management, in the context of integrated water resources management, which considered both negative and positive aspects of floods.

7.4.17 Congress commended the initiative of the Secretary-General to establish the EDRG within the WMO Secretariat to assist, among other things, in the rehabilitation of meteorological and hydrological infrastructures in Member countries following a disaster. In an emergency situation, the EDRG would determine the need to activate the EART for the purpose of providing assistance to NMHSs to ensure their continued ability to operate during and after the disaster. Congress noted the success of EDRG, in particular in providing assistance to Central America during floods through the active interaction with the Subregional Office. It recognized that more involvement of Regional and Subregional Offices in the EDRG activities would be necessary. Congress invited NMHSs to provide information on the impact of natural disasters to meteorological infrastructures to enable the EDRG to take timely action.

Cross-commission activities

7.4.18 Congress noted that, following the general endorsement of the areas of cross-commission activity by the fifty-third session of the Executive Council, the Meeting of the Presidents of Technical Commissions in 2002 had discussed a cross-commission project proposal on natural disaster mitigation in coastal lowlands presented by the co-president of JCOMM. It also noted that presidents had agreed that a document summarizing the proposed activities and related responsibilities within

the project should be prepared for submission to the Council. Following the Meeting recommendations, a draft project proposal entitled Natural Disaster Reduction in Coastal Lowlands had been prepared and presented to the fifty-fourth session of the Executive Council. Congress further noted that the Council had endorsed that cross-commission project proposal, requesting the presidents concerned to submit in consultation with the Secretary-General, specific proposals on the implementation of tasks included in the project.

7.4.19 As regarded further developments in that area, Congress was informed that the co-president of JCOMM had submitted an additional proposal to that project to the Meeting of the Presidents of Technical Commissions in February 2003. Congress noted that that proposal included the development of a generic system for mitigating the impacts of natural disasters, in particular tropical cyclones, in coastal lowlands, based on an assessment of those impacts on agricultural and other socio-economic sectors. Congress also noted the recommendation of the Meeting to incorporate the proposed activities in the project already endorsed by the Council and agreed that the new initiative should be treated as a demonstration project implemented in one of the countries affected by tropical cyclones. Congress requested the Commissions involved, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to finalize the project proposal, to identify a location for implementation of the demonstration project and to find appropriate partners for project funding.

Future trends

7.4.20 Congress noted with concern that the number of natural disasters was increasing, as well as their negative impact on the safety of life and the economy. Congress recognized the necessity of an accurate and systematic evaluation of those impacts and the transmission of the results of that evaluation to decision makers. Congress also recognized the need to define the level of expected and acceptable risk to life and property. Congress reaffirmed that WMO should continue to play a leading role, regarding mitigation of, and preparedness for, natural disasters of meteorological and hydrological origin and stressed the primary role of NMHSs with respect to management of such disasters that occurred in various time and space scales. Congress also recognized the need to assist NMHSs to enhance their role in the disaster reduction process at national and regional levels. Congress noted that natural disaster reduction activities covered a wide range of subjects from research to operational applications, crossing all the activities of WMO. Congress reaffirmed the role that the major programmes had played in natural disaster prevention and mitigation and agreed that they should strengthen their activities in that area.

7.4.21 Congress recognized the necessity to launch a new WMO major programme noting the

change in the main focus of natural disaster activities shifting from protection and recovery to prevention and management of risk. Congress also recognized that the new programme should be a major contributor to the development of developing countries in the future, namely Africa. Congress agreed to initiate a major programme on natural disaster prevention and mitigation, that would enhance international cooperation and collaboration in that field, as a major cross-cutting programme, based on the activities carried out by a number of WMO Programmes. The programme should coordinate WMO actions to improve risk analyses at the national and regional levels, to improve mechanisms and communication for the delivery, use and evaluation of warnings, and the provision of prompt advice and assistance to Members. Congress adopted Resolution 29 (Cg-XIV).

RESOLUTION 29 (Cg-XIV)

NATURAL DISASTER PREVENTION AND MITIGATION PROGRAMME

THE CONGRESS,

NOTING:

- (1) *The Abridged Final Report with Resolutions of the Thirteenth World Meteorological Congress (WMO-No. 902), agenda item 9.4,*
- (2) *The Abridged Final Report with Resolutions of the Fifty-fourth Session of the*

Executive Council (WMO-No. 945) agenda item 11,

CONSIDERING:

- (1) The increasing demands for NMHSs to play a key role for natural disaster reduction at the local, national and international levels for sustainable development and poverty eradication,

- (2) That IDNDR has been succeeded by a new substantive initiative, the ISDR, and that there is a need to ensure a substantial contribution of WMO and NMHSs to the implementation of the ISDR,

RECOGNIZING the significant role that WMO and NMHSs play in international disaster reduction activities that concern mitigation of, and preparedness for, natural disasters of meteorological or hydrological origin,

DECIDES:

- (1) To initiate a new WMO major programme on Natural Disaster Prevention and Mitigation as a cross-cutting programme to enhance international cooperation and collaboration in the field of natural disaster activities;
- (2) That the substance of the Natural Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Programme be as indicated in Chapter 6, Section 6.9 of the Sixth WMO Long-term Plan, adopted under Resolution 25 (Cg-XIV);

- (3) That the activities under the Natural Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Programme for the fourteenth financial period be as indicated in the consolidated programme and budget (2004-2007), as approved by Fourteenth Congress;

URGES Members to collaborate actively in, and give all possible support to, the implementation of the WMO Natural Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Programme;

REQUESTS the Executive Council, with the assistance of technical commissions concerned, to promote the implementation of the Natural Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Programme;

REQUESTS the Secretary-General within the available budgetary resources:

- (1) To assist in the implementation of the Programme;
- (2) To collaborate in the implementation of the Programme with other interested international organizations and programmes, in particular with ISDR.