



Towards a disaster free India

(For restricted circulation only)

# TIDINGS

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## Highlights

Early Warning Conference

UN-OCHA Meeting

Focus International

First India Disaster  
Management Congress

Meeting with UNHCR

## Contents

Message	- 1
Intl. Conf. on EWS	- 2
IDMC Initiatives	- 3
Delegations & Meetings	- 5
NIDM in partnership	- 5
NIDM Intl. Forum	- 6
The Dying Wisdom	- 7
Upcoming Events	- 8

## Paradigm Shift in Disaster Management

Disaster management in India is fast evolving from a reactive response oriented to a proactive strategy based system. The paradigm shift is spearheaded by the hard lessons learnt from successive disasters Latur earthquake (1993), Orissa super cyclone (1999), Bhuj earthquake (2001) and Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004). Government of India is at the centre stage in bringing out this shift in policies, legislations and institutions.

However, the role of government in disaster management can at best be supportive, in terms of providing resources, infrastructure and facilitating preparedness and mitigation measures. The crucial response would still lie with the community and with individual who have to get rid of the age-old culture of despair and helplessness and imbibe a new culture of safety and prevention in every walk of life. It is onto each one of us that we understand the magnitude of hazards and risks that we face in our lives and take steps to reduce the eventual impact. This is possible through awareness generation and capacity development at every level.

Information and knowledge are powerful instruments for disaster risk reduction. The better informed we are, the better equipped shall we be to prepare for and cope with disasters. Disaster related knowledge in India is being developed by various agencies within and outside the government, research and academic institutions and practitioners working in various aspects of disaster management. A major portion of this knowledge remains confined to academic discussions without integration in the national disaster management processes. NIDM has taken up the responsibility of integrating this knowledge among the administrators, professionals and eminent experts and practitioners by organizing the First India Disaster Management Congress in November 2006 at New Delhi. NIDM would be looking forward to contributions from organizations and individuals to make this initiative a success.

P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti

National Institute of Disaster Management, New Delhi

## Third International Conference on Early Warning (EWC III)

**Bonn 27-29 March 2006**

The Third International Conference on Early Warning Systems (EWC III) was organized jointly by the UNISDR & UNESCO and hosted by the German Government in Bonn from 27-29 March 2006. The venue of EWC III was the Internationales Kongresszentrum Bundeshaus, formerly the Parliament House of the Federal Republic of Germany.

EWC III was attended by over 1250 delegates from all over the globe which included ministers and senior government officials from 136

countries, scientists and experts from various organizations engaged in research on different aspects of the early warning systems, UN organizations, World Bank and other multi-lateral financial institutions, representatives of national and international NGOs, regional bodies and donor organizations. The Conference was structured in two Plenary Sessions, two Thematic sessions, one Round table and two Exhibitions.



*Third International Conference on EWS*

The highlight of the Conference was the address of President Clinton at the plenary and his round table with selected representatives from the tsunami affected countries. The Conference came out with a Compendium on Early Warning Projects which were selected through a global screening process. These projects were offered for donor support. A Global Survey of Early Warning System was also released on the occasion.

### NIDM submits report to the Second Administrative Reforms Commission

Government of India has constituted the Second Administrative Reforms Commission under the chairmanship of Mr. Veerappa Moily to suggest measures to achieve a proactive, responsive, accountable, sustainable and efficient administration for the country at all levels of government. The specific terms of reference of the Commission include **Crisis Management** to suggest ways to (a) quicken the Emergency Responses of administration, and (b) increase the effectiveness of the machinery to meet the crisis situation and enhance crisis preparedness.

The Commission had asked the National Institute of Disaster Management to carry out a study about various aspects of natural and man made disasters and give its analysis, findings and recommendations on (a) identification of areas prone to crisis, (b) preventive and preparedness measures, (c) early warning systems, (d) mitigation measures, (e) emergency response systems and (f) relief and rehabilitation measures. NIDM prepared a Concept Paper and a Questionnaire for eliciting views, comments, suggestions, perspectives, opinions from institutions/ organization and individuals on the subject.

Based on the comments received a Base Paper was developed which was deliberated in a national workshop at Delhi and four regional workshops held at Jammu, Chennai, Mumbai and Jaipur.



*ARC Workshop in Jammu*

Each of the regional workshops focused on specific aspect of natural and man made disasters. The workshops were attended by senior policy makers, scientists, field administrators, NGOs, community leaders and other civil society organizations.

The proceedings of the workshops in five volumes and the study report of the NIDM were submitted to the Commission on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2006. The Commission expressed its satisfaction with the work done by the NIDM.

## **NIDM to organize the First India Disaster Management Congress**

In the recent years, there is a phenomenal upsurge of knowledge and research on disaster risk reduction and management across many disciplines and subjects ranging from earth sciences to atmospheric, environmental, engineering, agricultural, medical, social, behavioral and management sciences, remote sensing, information and communication technologies etc. Research and knowledge creation in all these and related subjects are taking place at a fast pace in universities, research and development organizations, training institutions, government agencies, corporate sectors, community organizations and sometimes purely on individual initiatives, but mostly in an isolated and segmented manner, without much interaction and interface among the related disciplines.

While the nature of knowledge and research in particular disciplines are such that this has to be anchored in the domain of specific disciplines, greater interaction and interface among the disciplines would serve the cause of disaster risk mitigation in more than one way. First, research in one discipline would be benefited by knowledge in related fields it would validate, complement, and sometimes even correct the findings. Secondly, this would enlarge the perspectives of research in particular disciplines and provide a holistic framework for research. More importantly this would help to create a community of scholars, researchers and practitioners on disaster risk reduction who would be aware of the trend of research in different disciplines and able to interact with each other.

NIDM took the initiative of organizing a brainstorming session with a group of scientists, scholars and practitioners to discuss how best this interaction and interface can be promoted. It was agreed that a platform shall be created where researchers and practitioners shall meet, at least once in two years to present their research papers, debate on the issues, challenges, shortcomings and opportunities and discuss the areas of mutual cooperation and road maps. This platform shall be known as India Disaster Management Congress.



*Congress Logo*

Till such time that a society is registered for the Congress, National Institute of Disaster Management shall organize the Congress in collaboration with many partner organizations.

The First India Disaster Management Congress shall be held at New Delhi from 28 to 30 November 2006.

**Thematic Sessions & Call for Papers:**

The Congress shall have 7 thematic clusters and 17 thematic Sessions, each covering a separate aspect of disaster risk mitigation and management. The Thematic Clusters shall conduct their proceedings in parallel sessions.

<p><b>Thematic Cluster A: Geologically Related Disasters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Earthquake</li> <li>○ Landslide</li> </ul> <p><b>Thematic Cluster C: Human Induced Disasters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Industrial &amp; Chemical Disasters</li> <li>○ Nuclear Disasters</li> </ul> <p><b>Thematic Cluster E: Health Related Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Disaster Health Management</li> <li>○ Disaster Psycho-Social Care Management</li> </ul> <p><b>Thematic Cluster F: Role of ICT in Disaster Management</b></p> <p><b>Thematic Cluster G: Public-Private partnership in Disaster Management</b></p>	<p><b>Thematic Cluster B: Hydro-meteorological Disasters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Climate Change</li> <li>○ Flood</li> <li>○ Drought</li> <li>○ Cyclone &amp; Tsunami</li> </ul> <p><b>Thematic Cluster D: Development, Governance &amp; Cross-Cutting Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Disaster, Development &amp; Governance</li> <li>○ Community based Disaster Management</li> <li>○ Disaster Risk Financing &amp; Micro-Finance</li> <li>○ Gender &amp; Other Social Issues</li> <li>○ Role of Armed &amp; Para-Military Forces</li> <li>○ Role of NGOs &amp; Civil Society</li> </ul>
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A group of eminent scientists, scholars and practitioners in respective fields shall organize these Sessions invite abstracts and select thirty-five to forty abstracts for presentation as full papers in each of these Sessions.

The abstracts should not exceed 300 words and must be submitted either electronically or by post to the Chairperson of the concerned Thematic Group on or before 31st July 2006 along with name of the author/ co-authors, designation, institutional affiliation, postal and e-mail address. The final selection of the abstracts shall be notified to the authors on or before 16th August 2006.

A copy to the abstract and full paper shall be also submitted to the Conference Secretariat for information. The address of the Conference Secretariat is as under:

**Secretariat**

India Disaster Management Congress  
National Institute of Disaster Management  
5B, Indraprastha Estate, Ring Road, New Delhi-110 002  
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Website [www.nidm.net/idmc](http://www.nidm.net/idmc)

# Delegations and Meetings



## **UN-OCHA Team Visits NIDM**

Mr. Etsui, Director of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and Mr. Derrik, Director of the Asia Pacific Regional Office of OCHA visited NIDM on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2006 and discussed possible areas of collaboration in the field of disaster management. Mr. Etsui mentioned that India is considered as one of the chief partners in OCHA's activities to facilitate implementation of sustainable solutions for preparedness. OCHA, with a mandate to mobilize and coordinate coherent humanitarian response, has a presence in 30 countries through 6 regional offices. The Asia Pacific Regional Office has a mandate to build regional and national capacities in alleviating misery in the region. It also deals with complex emergencies, civil-military coordination and advocacy. In the interaction with NIDM, Regional Partnerships in Disaster Response Strategies and joint initiatives on implementation of HFA were discussed as future possible partnerships between NIDM and UNOCHA.

## **Meeting with Focus International**

A team from FOCUS International, a humanitarian agency funded by Aga Khan Foundation visited NIDM on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2006 and discussed possible partnership in imparting training to medical first responders. The visiting team also discussed the module prepared by them on medical first responders with ED and faculty NIDM.

## **Meeting with Chief of Mission UNHCR**

Ms Carol Batchelor, Chief of Mission UNHCR met ED NIDM on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2006 to discuss possible avenues of collaboration. A Regional Workshop on Disaster Preparedness focusing on the SAARC countries will be organized by UNHCR in collaboration with NIDM in November 2006.

## **NIDM in Partnership**

- NIDM signed a MoU with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) for collaboration in applied research and documentation in disaster management. The MoU was signed on the occasion of the inauguration of Jamshedji Tata Centre for Disaster Management by Dr. Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2006.
- NIDM has entered into a MoU with IP University, New Delhi for partnership in training and capacity building to students for inculcating a Culture of Prevention



*Smt. Sheila Dixit, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Delhi presided over MoU between NIDM and I.P. University*

## Executive Director NIDM nominated Member of Advisory Group of Central Emergency Response Fund

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appointed a 12 member Advisory Group for the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). The function of the Advisory Group will be to provide periodic policy guidance and expert advice to the Secretary-General on the use and impact of the Fund, including on the timeliness and appropriateness of allocations and management of the CERF. The Advisory Group will also review the Fund's performance against the objectives set by the General Assembly and assess funding levels and make recommendations regarding replenishment.

Mr. P.G.Dhar Chakrabarti Executive Director of the NIDM has been appointed as one of the Members of this Advisory Group in his personal capacity. The other Members of this Group include:

- Ms. Marika Fahlen, Special Envoy/Advisor on the Horn of Africa for the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Mr. Gregory C. Gottlieb, Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance;
- Mr. Michael Mosselmans, Head of the Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department of the Department for International Development in the United Kingdom;
- Ms. Elisabeth Kraakaas Rasmusson, Representative of the Norwegian Refugee Council (in Geneva, Switzerland);
- Mr. Park Soo-Gil, President of the United Nations Association of the Republic of Korea;
- Mr. Ruud Treffers, Director General for Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands,
- Ms. Barbara Carby, Director General of the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management of Jamaica,
- Mr. Ahmed El-Kholei, Professor of Urban Planning in the Department of Architecture of the University of Menolia in Egypt;
- Ms. Jemilah Mahmood, President of the Malaysian Medical Relief Society, and
- Mr. Siphon George Nene, Deputy Director-General of the Multilateral Branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa.

### NIDM in International Forum

- ★ ED NIDM participated in the Third International Conference on Early Warning Systems (EWC III) at Bonn, Germany on 27-29 March 2006.
- ★ Ms Chandrani Bandyopadhyay, Assistant Professor NIDM participated in a Regional Workshop on Community Approach to Flood Management organized under the aegis of WMO at Dhaka from 3-5 April 2006.
- ★ Mr. P.G.Dhar Chakrabarti attended the first meeting of the Advisory Group of the Central Emergency Response Fund on May 2006 at the UN Headquarters at New York, USA.

## 'The Dying Wisdom'



**350 Year Old Building  
at Uttarkashi**

*Carbon dating has determined the age of the building to be more than 350 years.*

*The building has survived many earthquakes in the fragile Garhwal Himalaya, including the devastating earthquake of 1803.*

*In the same region many masonry buildings constructed in recent years have collapsed.*

*Seismic engineers found many earthquake resistant features in the building which resisted the ground shaking in successive earthquakes.*

Contributed by  
Dr. Suneet Naithani,  
Nainital

Natural hazards had been part of human existence since the dawn of civilization. The communities have learnt to live with the disasters and in this process they have developed coping mechanisms that are based on accumulated local knowledge, experience and wisdom for centuries.

Sometimes such traditional coping mechanisms were completely overtaken by the sheer magnitude of mega disasters that have devastated the communities but still communities have learnt to bounce back to their normal lives.

There are lots to learn from these resilience and coping mechanisms, which the communities in the hazardous zones have inherited as part of their socialization process. No amount of training or research could possibly implant the skills and wisdom that is transmitted from one generation to another through a natural process of living. There may be many weaknesses in such traditional wisdom, but there is much strength as well in such wisdom which must not be lost sight of and which must be harmonized with the modern practices.

The greatest strengths of traditional mechanisms are that these are developed indigenously with locally available resources, are cost effective, have withstood the test of time and can be easily adopted, adapted and replicated.

In our zeal to do everything new we tend to forget the traditional wisdom and in this process we are not only losing a knowledge system which was internalized as part of our culture, we are also making the communities dependent on outside and in this process the continuity of traditional knowledge system is disrupted, a process which late environmentalist Mr. Anil Agarwal had described as *Dying Wisdom*.

Being one of the oldest civilizations in the world, the Indian sub-continent has plenty of such dying wisdoms on disaster management, which need to be documented, revived and made part of our overall strategies of disaster risk reduction and management.

***P.G.Dhar Chakrabarti***

## Training Programmes

### On Campus

- *Earthquake Risk Mitigation & Management* at NIDM, 17-21 April 2006
- *Cyclone Mitigation & Management* at NIDM, 24-28 April 2006
- *Disaster Health Care Management* at NIDM, 1-5 May 2006. The program was inaugurated by Gen. J. R. Bharadwaj, Member, NDMA
- *Application of Geo-Information in Disaster Management*, 24-26 May 2006

### Off Campus

- *Disaster Management for NYKS Functionaries* at Bhopal, Bangalore, Chandigarh, Guwahati, facilitated by NIDM Faculty, March 2006
- Workshop on *Preparation of District Disaster Management Plan*, HIPA Shimla, 8-10 May 2006
- *Community Based Disaster Management*, YASHADA, Pune, 8-11 May 2006

## Upcoming Events

### Workshop

- *South Asia Policy Dialogue on Regional Disaster Risk Reduction*, 21-22 August 2006, at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi

### Training Programs

- *Earthquake Risk Mitigation & Management*, YASHADA, 29 May - 2 June 2006
- *Earthquake Risk Mitigation & Management*, at ATI Srinagar, 12-16 June 2006
- *Industrial & Chemical Disasters*, NIDM 19-22 June 2006 in collaboration with National Safety Council of India, Mumbai
- Training Workshop on *Heat & Cold Waves*, Uttar Pradesh Academy of Administration & Management, Lucknow, 26-28 June 2006.
- *Hailstorm and Cloudburst: Causes and Mitigation Measures* at HCMRIPA Rajasthan, 28-29 June 2006
- *Awareness Programme on Geo-information in Disaster Management* at IIRS, Dehradun, 10-14 July 2006
- *Cyclone Risk and Mitigation Programme*, in collaboration with Andhra Pradesh Academy of Rural Development, Hyderabad, 7-11 August 2006

We welcome comments/responses/articles from readers of our Newsletter  
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