



Programme/Invitation

Disaster Mitigation and Prevention Policies for Sustainable Development

Berlin, 25 to 28 January 1994



Entwicklungspolitisches Forum
Development Policy Forum
Berlin

EF

The German Foundation for International Development (DSE)
has the honour of inviting

Dr. Omer Jairo Cardona

to participate in the
International Round Table
**DISASTER MITIGATION AND PREVENTION POLICIES
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**Preparation for the World Conference
on Natural Disaster Reduction
Yokohama, May 1994**

organized by the

Development Policy Forum
of the
German Foundation for International Development (DSE)

in cooperation with the

Secretariat of the
United Nations International Decade
for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR)

Berlin, 25 to 28 January 1994



Prior to the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, Yokohama, May 1994, the meeting constitutes an informal policy dialogue at executive level and aims at contributing to an update and review of activities, progress and deficits, observed during the first half of the United Nations International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR).

The discussion will focus on policy aspects of the correlation between disaster mitigation and sustainable development, recognizing that further consolidation is needed at national and international level in order to achieve a better understanding of its relevance.

Through the enhancement of a continued dialogue, better comprehension is sought of the vital role, national, regional and international activities of disaster mitigation and prevention have to play for safeguarding sustainable development and environmental protection world-wide.

An informal discussion between government officials in charge of national disaster mitigation activities in disaster-prone countries and other focal points, representing the international community within and outside the UN system, will help in defining further steps to be taken at the World Conference in Japan 1994 and beyond. The recommendations of the meeting will be made available to the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference 1994 for further consideration.



Heinz Bühler
Director General
German Foundation for
International Development
(DSE)



Olavi Elo
Director
IDNDR Secretariat



Ingar Brüggemann
Chairman
DSE Development Policy Forum

Venue:
Deutsche Stiftung für internationale Entwicklung (DSE)
Villa Borsig, Reihewerder
D-13505 Berlin

Tel.: (0 30) 43 07-2 04 (Conference Room)
(0 30) 43 07-3 42 (Office)
Fax: (0 30) 43 07-2 50

Accommodation:
DSE Guesthouse (address s. a.)
Tel.: (0 30) 43 07-2 02/2 03
and
Airport Hotel Esplanade
Rohrdamm 80
D-13629 Berlin
Tel.: (0 30) 38 38 90
Fax: (0 30) 38 38 99 00

Provisional Programme

Tuesday, 25 January 1994

19.30 hrs.

Dinner reception
hosted by the German Foundation
for International Development (DSE)

Wednesday, 26 January 1994

9.30 hrs.

Opening Session

Ingar Brüggemann, Chairman
DSE Development Policy Forum

Addresses

The Representative of the
Federal Minister for Economic
Cooperation and Development
The Representative of the
Federal Foreign Office
The Chairman of the
German IDNDR Committee

10.30 hrs.

Introductory Speech

11.00 – 12.45 hrs.

Working Session I

Disaster Mitigation and Prevention for
Sustainable Development:
state of discussion, conceptual work and
world-wide activities

The costs of disasters

The economic and social impact on
development

15.00 – 18.00 hrs.

Working Session II

Mitigation and Prevention Policies for
Modern Societies: Reducing Vulnerability

The fragile balance of mega-cities
– Relative costs of relief and prevention

19.00 hrs.

Cultural programme

Thursday, 27 January 1994

9.00 – 12.30 hrs.

Working Session III

National Policy Coherence and Disaster Management

- Shaping disaster prevention policy
- Organization of disaster management

15.00 – 18.30 hrs.

Working Session IV

International and National Cooperation and Coordination in Disaster Mitigation and Prevention for Sustainable Development

- Earth and mankind – a dual relationship
- Policy suggestions for new concepts of financing disaster mitigation and prevention as part of overall development financing strategies

19.30 hrs.

Dinner in town

Friday, 28 January 1994

9.30 – 12.30 hrs.

Closing Session

Discussion of Findings and Recommendations

Annotated Agenda

Wednesday, 26 January 1994

Introductory Speech

The keynote speech will provide participants with the overall conceptual framework for their discussions, highlighting presently observed progress and deficits in the process of IDNDR. A short plenary discussion will follow, in order to launch the policy dialogue benefitting from the personal knowledge and expertise of a reputed personality.

Working Session I

Disaster Mitigation and Prevention for Sustainable Development

The prevailing perception of disasters is often based on too generalized, superficial awareness of the random occurrence of a number of very damaging events, caused by phenomena seemingly beyond human control. This view does not differentiate enough between causes and effects. It is not yet sufficiently understood that only the physical events are actually beyond the full control of mankind, and losses incurred in a natural disaster may be the result of human error and miscalculation. For example, in the urban context, constructions that reduce a river section available for peak discharges may bring about flooding. Lack of decisive counteraction and political will aggravate the situation.

The enormous number of casualties, financial and socio-economic losses caused by natural and man-made disasters have a reverse effect on the development process as well as the natural environment, with developing countries having a fragile balance of resources being most severely impaired.

Funds and resources, otherwise used to support development, have to be transferred to relief and recovery activities. When national policies and development funding by the international community do not take actively in account natural hazards and the risk of disasters, new hazards and threats may be created, and the vulnerability of a country to natural and man-made disasters may be greatly increased.

Main thrust of the discussion needs to focus on the necessity to continue policy and planning with disaster prevention and mitigation measures nationally and internationally. Participants are called upon to report on their observations and experience in this context.

Wednesday, 26 January 1994

Working Session II

Mitigation and Prevention Policies for Present-Day Societies: Reducing Vulnerability

Topic I: The fragile balance of mega-cities

The distinction between “natural” disasters, caused by natural hazards, and “man-made” disasters, resulting from human-generated hazards and environmental degradation, is becoming increasingly problematic as many disasters are the product of both natural and human factors interacting with each other.

Present-day societies, whether in industrialized or developing countries, tend to concentrate large quantities of vital human resources, housing, infrastructure and productive investments in urban areas, frequently in locations exposed per se to a variety of natural hazards. This site vulnerability is compounded by large-scale urbanization and migratory processes. Other factors, such as poor hygienic conditions in low income areas, scarcity of safe water, loss of employment and income, occupational accidents, also affect the precarious balance of today’s urban conglomerates. By the year 2010 over 50 % of the world population will live in urban centers.

The linkage between disaster proneness, the environment and development is further illustrated by rising sea levels, caused by global warming. Today, more than 60 % of the world’s population already live in coastal areas, while 65 % of the cities with population above 2,5 million are located along or near coasts.

The discussion might focus on the issue whether present-day governmental policy has reacted adequately to these facts during past years until today.

If not,

what are to be seen as the main hindrances in shaping a cohesive disaster mitigation and prevention policy nationally?

how could these obstacles be overcome in order to meet the objectives of a disaster mitigation and prevention policy for sustainable development on national, regional and international levels?

Topic II: A Cost Assessment of Relief and Prevention and the Impact of Disasters on Development

According to World Bank estimates, disasters take about 250,000 lives world-wide each year and cause US \$ 40 billion in physical damage. Wind storms, floods and earthquakes alone cost an average US \$ 18.8 million a day. The impact of disasters is disproportionately high on developing countries, with the losses to GNP due to disasters being about twenty times greater there than in more developed countries.

Discussion in this context may focus on the following questions:

- Where is it cost-effective to allocate additional funds to protect society from disaster and reduce vulnerability?
- When billions of dollars per year are invested in infrastructure programmes and in long-term capital development, what measures should be taken to make these investments less exposed or more resistant to natural disasters?

Thursday, 27 January 1994

Working Session III

National Policy Coherence and Disaster Management

Topic I : Shaping disaster prevention policy

Topic II: Organization of disaster management

Development planners have tended sometimes to consider disaster prevention efforts as “unaffordable extras”. Every decision in a disaster-prone country about its allocation of resources to disaster mitigation, however, has an impact on the society’s potential development. Direct, indirect and secondary costs, especially those associated with the cycle of poverty and disasters, are of great importance to the potential for any long-term, sustainable development, if disaster prevention elements are included. International damage assessment studies prove that not to do so, is both economically irrational and politically unwise.

Many policy-makers in traditionally affected countries often only react to disasters. During and after the disaster, perhaps for a period of about 15 days, all decisions and actions will be emergency-oriented as authorities scramble to bring relief to the victims. Sometimes, an immense self-help effort will be made before international relief can be mobilized to supplement or replenish stocks and medical supplies. Whilst the disaster may disappear from the news’ headlines, the impact lasts for years.

In this context, participants may discuss the following questions:

- What legislative, administrative and safety regulations exist to conceptualize a national disaster preparedness policy and action plan and to safeguard public relief activities?
- Are responsibilities of the various government and military departments adequately defined in order to avoid confusion in the line of command, allow for concerted action and pooling of resources and logistical hardware?
- To what extent are non-governmental organizations and local relief groups integrated into a national disaster prevention policy concept?
- Do NGOs have adequate access to resources, relief hardware and communication equipment?
- Are training of human resources and public awareness building measures adequately taken, what kind of disaster preparedness training material and documentation is available and used by whom?

Thursday, 27 January 1994

Working Session IV

International and National Cooperation and Coordination in Disaster Mitigation and Prevention for Sustainable Development

Topic I: Earth and mankind – a dual relationship

Topic II: Advanced technology: an asset for disaster-prone countries

The previous sessions outlined some of the different factors that affect countries and the international community when facing disasters. In recent years, the coordination of all the efforts undertaken to manage disasters, and by all the actors involved, has become a topic of discussion at international fora, such as UNCED.

Attention has shifted from “simple” events, like natural disasters or technical accidents, to “complex emergencies” which are actually the result of political crises, i. e. the peak of irrational human behaviour. Huge resources have been reallocated, often reducing development assistance budgets, for large-scale operations in few hot spots.

In today’s world, all natural hazards can be adequately assessed, some of them even predicted with a certain degree of accuracy adequate for the protection of human lives. Science and technology have produced early warning systems and construction techniques that can assist greatly in reducing losses. Risk mapping can protect investment losses.

In this context, participants might focus on following questions:

- What political framework governments have to provide in order to coherently applicate, supervise and systematically use these tools in society?
- Are national capacities of a disaster management system, disaster preparedness training schemes, public disaster awareness building programmes adequately established and strengthened?
- What is the role the private sector can assume to assist governmental and multilateral efforts?
- How can information and communication gaps between scientists, public authorities, NGOs and the population be overcome, so that societies can lose the fear of inevitable disasters and move ahead to control their impact?
- How can specific disaster-related inventory of the international community and specialized UN organizations (such as forecasting and warning systems, hazard and risk mapping, financial resources and cost-sharing) be more efficiently used and synergized with national efforts?
- What lessons and experiences can be drawn from efforts to fully implement this conceptual and technological partnership?

Friday, 28 January 1994

Identification of Findings and Recommendations

It is expected that the Round Table will specify its findings and recommendations that have emerged in the working sessions. These recommendations will be submitted to the Preparatory Commission and the Secretariat of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in Yokohama, for further consideration and implementation.

General Information

Dates

The Round Table begins with a dinner reception on Tuesday, 25 January 1994, and ends with a luncheon on Friday, 28 January 1994.

International Travel

The travel expenses of citizens from developing countries might be borne by the German Foundation for International Development (DSE) if special notice is provided. These participants will receive from the DSE pre-paid round-trip air tickets, in general through local Lufthansa offices or a pool partner's agency. Lufthansa or the pool partner will contact the participant once he/she has confirmed attendance by returning the registration form attached to the official invitation and programme to the Development Policy Forum. Any individual re-routing or stop-overs not covered by the carrier's mileage allowance must be borne by the participant.

Immigration Requirements

Entry visas, where applicable, will be provided by the German embassies/consulates. Further assistance, if required, will be provided by the German diplomatic missions, which also extend the official invitations to participants.

Arrival and Transportation

Guests are asked to arrive in the course of 25 January 1994, but not later than 6.00 p. m. Participants will be met at the airport by DSE staff if they provide notification of their time of arrival and flight number on the registration form attached to the official invitation. Guests who choose to travel on their own or have changed their booking at short notice should proceed by taxi to Villa Borsig. The fare from Tegel airport is approximately 28 DM, from Schönefeld airport approximately 80 DM.

Venue and Accommodation

All participants will be accommodated by DSE at its conference centre and guesthouse Villa Borsig, Reiherwerder, D-13505 Berlin, or at Airport Hotel Esplanade, Rohrdamm 80, D-13629 Berlin, Tel.: (0 30) 38 38 90; Fax: 38 38 99 00.

Conference Languages

English; German, French, Spanish, if required.

Financial Arrangements

All participants are guests of the DSE for the duration of the Round Table and will be provided with full board and lodging. They will not, however, receive a per diem. Guests are asked to bring with them convertible currency to cover the cost of personal extras, such as laundry, telephone calls and fax. Preferably, participants should exchange foreign currency into DM at the airport; due to the lack of a banking facility at Villa Borsig, we regret not being able to provide for currency exchange or to accept personal cheques or credit cards at the conference centre.

Cultural Programme

Seen as an integral part of the meeting, a performance at one of the reputed Berlin concert halls or operas and an informal dinner in town provide further opportunities for conference participants to establish contacts and to meet members of the Berlin community.