

## The Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction Sendai, Japan, 14 - 18 March 2015

The United National (UN) Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) was held in Sendai, Japan, from 14 to 18 March 2015. Policymakers from 187 countries gathered for a ten-yearly meeting on disaster risk reduction with hopes high that the conference held in the earthquake-tsunami-hit region of Japan might provide a springboard for efforts to tackle disasters related to natural events. *Alik Ismail-Zadeh, Secretary General of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG), participated in the conference as a representative of the UN Scientific and Technological Community Major Group.*

“What we are discussing here is very real for millions of people in the world,” UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon said in a speech at the Opening Ceremony of the conference. He stated that annual economic losses now exceed US\$ 300 billion annually. “We can watch that number grow as more people suffer. Or we can dramatically lower that figure and invest the savings in development. Six billion dollars allocated each year can result in savings of up to US\$360 billion by 2030, the Secretary-General said. He praised the existing global agreement on disaster risk reduction, the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), which was adopted ten years ago in Kobe, Japan. He said it “has saved thousands of lives. Now we must respond to the world’s growing needs by empowering individuals, supporting communities and backing promises with resources.”



*Mr. Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary General (left panel) and Mr. Shinzo Abe, the Japanese Prime Minister*

The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Shinzo Abe, pledged \$US 4 billion to support implementation of the “Sendai Cooperation Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction” over the next four years. Speaking at the Opening ceremony Mr. Abe said: “Disaster risk reduction is the most important challenge for both developed and developing countries. For developing countries in particular, where 90% of disaster victims are concentrated.” The financial package will focus on the development of disaster-proof infrastructure, the promotion of global and regional cooperation and the training of 40,000 government officials and local leaders to play a leading role in national efforts for disaster risk reduction. Japan will make its expertise and knowledge available.



On the occasion of the WCDRR, the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the International Social Sciences Council (ISSC) released a synthesis paper “[Disaster risks research and assessment to promote risk reduction and management](#)”, which aims to highlight potential contributions of science to disaster risk reduction. This report was initiated, co-written and co-edited by Alik Ismail-Zadeh.

On a request of A. Ismail-Zadeh, a summary for policymaker of the paper was distributed to UN Member State representatives via the delegation of the Russian Federation.

On 18 March, representatives of UN Member States adopted the major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda, *the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 – the new international framework for disaster risk reduction*, a far-reaching new framework for disaster risk reduction with seven targets and four priorities for action. Margareta Wahlström, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, said: “The adoption of this new framework for disaster risk reduction opens a major new chapter in sustainable development as it outlines clear targets and priorities for action which will lead to a substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health.



The framework outlines seven global targets to be achieved over the next 15 years: a substantial reduction in global disaster mortality; a substantial reduction in numbers of affected people; a reduction in economic losses in relation to global GDP; substantial reduction in disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, including health and education facilities; an increase in the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020; enhanced international cooperation; and increased access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments.

The World Conference was attended by over 6,500 participants including 2,800 government representatives from 187 governments. For more details visit <http://www.wcdrr.org>.

## Sendai Partnership for 2015-2025

Several scientific and academic institutions and governmental and non-governmental organizations proposed that the Sendai Partnerships 2015-2025 for Global Promotion of Understanding and Reducing Landslide Disaster Risk be established. These partnerships will engage major stakeholders concerned with the challenge of understanding and reducing disaster risk, including relevant international, national, local, governmental, and non-governmental institutions, programs, and initiatives, to mobilize and coordinate their efforts to pursue prevention, to provide practical solutions, education, communication, and public outreach in reduction of landslide disaster risk. The Partnerships will focus on delivering tangible and practical results that are related to the implementation of the goals and targets of the post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. IUGG was invited to join the Partnership in promoting scientific understanding of the processes leading to landslide disasters. The ceremony of signing the Sendai Partnerships 2015-2025 for Global Promotion of Understanding and Reducing Landslide Disaster Risk was held in Sendai, Japan on 16 March 2015.



*During the ceremony*

The document was signed by *Kyoji Sassa*, Executive Director of the International Consortium on Landslides; *Margareta Wahlström*, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of UN Office for Disaster risk Reduction (UNISDR); *Qunli Han*, Director, Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences of UNESCO; *Dominique Burgeon*, Director Emergency and Rehabilitation Division Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; *Kazuhiko Takeuchi*, Senior Vice-Rector, United Nations University; *Gordon McBean*, ICSU President; *Toshimitsu Komatsu*, Vice President, World Federation of Engineering Organizations; *Roland Oberhänsli*, IUGS President; *Alik Ismail-Zadeh*, IUGG Secretary General; *Kaoru Saito*, Director, Disaster Preparedness and International Cooperation Division, Disaster Management Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan; *Hideaki Maruyama*, Director, Office for Disaster Reduction Research, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan; *Takashi Onishi*, President, Science Council of Japan; *Kayo Inaba*, Executive Vice President of Kyoto University; *Franco Gabrielli*, Head, National Civil Protection Department Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Government of Italy; and *Jadran Perinic*, Director General, National Protection and Rescue Directorate, Republic of Croatia.