

# Conference Statement

## **Disaster Risk Reduction as an Important Process for Adaptation to Climate Change**

Representatives of National Platforms and HFA Focal Points from 18 countries in Europe, as well as from the Council of Europe Major Hazard Agreement, UN-ISDR secretariat and the European Commission met on February 19-20 in Bonn on the invitation of the German National Platform (DKKV).

Participants discussed a range of topics which included:

- Closer links among National Platforms and with the UNISDR secretariat, Council of Europe and the EC
- Reporting mechanisms on HFA implementation
- The 2009 Global Platform and National Platforms possible role and input and
- Climate change, the links between adaptation and disaster risk reduction

The role of disaster risk reduction in adaptation to climate change was at the core of the discussions. The 4<sup>th</sup> report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) clearly warned about the expected negative impacts of climate change. Climate changes is already taking place and even if there was an immediate curtailing of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, people would still have to live with a changing climate and its effects in the coming decades. The consequences will have an impact on all regions.

Meteorological and hydrological events comprise 75% of the disasters resulting from natural events. An increase in natural hazards and extreme weather events is expected in the coming decades. They are likely to affect the distribution and the size of vulnerable areas.

The process of disaster risk reduction aims to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards and extreme weather events by reducing vulnerability and improving society's resilience. Thus, it is essential that relevant elements of disaster risk reduction become an integral part of climate adaptation strategies.

Immediate and substantial planning of strategies and action is needed for all countries, and especially for developing countries, that do not have sufficient resources to meet the challenges of adaptation to climate change.

The following important events and declarations reflect the challenges with adaptation to climate change:

- Stockholm Plan of Action for Integrating Disaster Reduction and Climate Change Impacts in Poverty Reduction
- Oslo Policy Forum 2008: Changing the way we develop: dealing with disasters in Climate Change
- Global Humanitarian Forum 2008 – The Human Face of Climate Change
- The Nairobi Work Programme
- The Action Plan of Bali

The representatives of National Platforms and HFA Focal Points suggest that the work being done by nations should support the integration of relevant components of disaster risk reduction as an important element in adaptation strategies to cope with natural hazards and extreme events.

They further suggest that:

- UN-ISDR should select the integration of relevant components of disaster risk reduction into adaptation for climate change as the key topic of the Global Platform in June 2009 in Geneva and give the necessary visibility to the topic.
- WMO should give a prominent role to disaster risk reduction at the World Climate Conference in August.
- One of the outcomes of COP 15 in Copenhagen in December 2009 should be to encourage Member States to incorporate relevant components of disaster risk reduction in their work (*or in their programmes*) promoting adaptation to climate change.

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