

Seventh Meeting of the IRDR Scientific Committee  
*Ravello, Italy, 9-11 May 2012*

### **A proposal from the International Union for Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG)**

At the 30<sup>th</sup> ICSU General Assembly (FAO, Rome, Italy, 27-30 September 2011) the delegation of the International Union for Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG) submitted a resolution effectively proposing the setting up of an intergovernmental platform akin to the IPCC for the assessment of disaster risk. The draft resolution was declared non-receivable from a procedural standpoint.

A second attempt was made by the Union, with a revised wording (see Annex 1), but this was also rejected by the Nominations Committee, arguing that, since although the subject of disaster risk had been raised during the Assembly (a presentation on IRDR by Jane Rovins), there had been no specific discussion on an assessment process – something that would potentially represent a very substantial commitment by ICSU and others.

IUGG expressed its disappointment that the Assembly would not be considering its proposed resolution, which it considered to be an urgent issue that could not wait until the next GA. There was some procedural to and fro on receivability of the resolution, a motion from the floor, duly seconded, to receive it, a brief presentation by IUGG followed by some discussion, and finally a suggestion by the Chair that full consideration of the substance of the resolution proposed by IUGG be left to the ICSU Executive Board. The General Assembly so decided.

At its recent (2-4 April 2012) 107<sup>th</sup> Session, the ICSU Executive Board duly addressed the IUGG text. It promptly decided to invite IRDR to give its advice on the matter, which it would consider at its next meeting on 13-14 November 2012.

This current meeting of the IRDR Scientific Committee is therefore invited to give its views on the wisdom and feasibility of the IUGG proposals, especially in the light of IRDR's own plans regarding the development of AIRDR.

## **Resolution 1. Science on Disaster Risk**

*Whereas* the first decade of the XXIst century has been marked by a significant number of disasters triggered by natural and human-induced hazards, such as devastating earthquakes (e.g. 2004 Sumatra-Andaman in the Indian Ocean, 2008 Sichuan in China, 2010 Haiti, and 2011 Great East Japan), which triggered tsunamis and landslides; floods (e.g. in western and central Europe in 2002, China in 2007; Taiwan and Philippines in 2009; Pakistan in 2010; and Australia in 2010); cyclones and hurricanes (e.g. Katrina in 2005; and Nargis in 2008); and some others, resulting in tragic loss of life, property and a nuclear emergency;

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*Considering* the rapidly increasing vulnerability to natural and human-induced hazards at global, regional, and local levels; and the continuous increase of fatalities, the number of people affected, and property damage caused by natural events;

*Realizing* that disaster risk reduction (prevention, mitigation and preparedness), including warning systems, needs long term planning; and that reducing the impact of disasters should be addressed with higher priority from global background to local levels;

*Noting* that the economic impact of disasters exceeds the cost of mitigation by orders of magnitude;

that existing scientific knowledge and technology for disaster risk assessment and mitigation could provide impetus to more effective preventive measures and recovery processes; and

that the reduction of predictive uncertainty is one of the most important scientific agenda items in natural hazard and disaster risk reduction;

*Recommends* that the ICSU-ISSC-UNISDR Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) Programme together with existing relevant institutions to start a negotiation on setting up a process of assessing and synthesizing the policy-relevant results of peer reviewed published research on:

- the understanding of the natural phenomena and the social vulnerability associated with disasters;
- the capability of predictive systems to disseminate timely and accurate information needed for policy and decision making;
- methodologies and approaches for reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience of societies; and

- the overall ability of societies to reduce risk (prevent, mitigate and prepare for the increasing impact of natural events).

The assessment would contribute to enhance the knowledge of disaster risk at global, regional, and local levels and the awareness of the people living with risk. The assessment should be undertaken by a high-level body of experts on disaster risk reduction to be established by governments.