

# Living with Risk

A global review of disaster  
reduction initiatives

Preliminary version  
Geneva, July 2002

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Prepared as an inter-agency effort coordinated by the ISDR Secretariat with special support from the Government of Japan, the World Meteorological Organization and the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (Kobe, Japan)



A world map is visible in the background, showing continents and oceans. The map is overlaid on a blue background with a green horizontal band at the top. The map is slightly faded and serves as a decorative element.

## Living with Risk

*“In recent years the world has witnessed an interminable succession of disasters -- floods, storms, earthquakes, landslides, volcanic eruptions and wildfires that have many thousands of claimed lives, caused material losses in the tens of billions of dollars, and inflicted a terrible toll on developing countries in particular, where disasters divert attention and resources needed desperately to escape poverty.*

*..... Living with risk shows that we are far from helpless in the face of natural hazards. Early warning and risk reduction measures have been important factors in helping to reduce significantly the number of people who lose their lives to disasters. New planning and forecasting tools are helping to mitigate the devastation regularly wrought by floods. We can and must build a world of resilient communities and nations. I hope that this publication reaches the widest possible readership and rouses the international community to do its utmost to better equip people everywhere for life in our hazard-filled planet.”*

*Kofi A. Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations.*

Earthquakes are inevitable, but death in an earthquake is not. Floods are a fact of life, but they need not wash away health, hope and livelihoods. Living with risk- a global review of disaster reduction initiatives is a publication to guide and inspire practitioners in disaster and environmental management, and sustainable development, coordinated by the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction of the United Nations. It focuses on the lessons from the past on how to reduce risk and vulnerability to hazards and on the challenges of tomorrow.

Disaster and risk reduction need to become essential parts of sustainable development. That is because vulnerability to natural, technological and ecological hazards are driven by social, economic and environmental activity. Natural hazards threaten everybody. But to live with them is also an imperative that involves everybody, from villagers to heads of state, from bankers and lawyers to farmers and foresters, from meteorologists to media chiefs. The annual toll of climate related disasters has doubled in five years, and increased impacts are expected from climate change. Human pressure on the environment has never been greater. Living with risk outlines the challenges ahead in a race against time.

The ISDR Secretariat welcomes comments and sharing of experiences, which will be reflected in coming issues of this global review.

## NOTE

This edition of "Living with Risk. A global review of disaster reduction initiatives" is a preliminary version of a final publication, which will be published early 2003. The final revised version will consider comments received and will track further developments in risk and disaster reduction thinking. It will also elaborate more on those regions not fully addressed in this preliminary issue. It will propose a systematic and continuing process to monitor progress in this field. Comments, corrections and additional information are all welcomed and can be sent to the ISDR Secretariat by 30 September, 2002, for them to be considered. Related information is available on a reference database maintained by the ISDR Secretariat, and soon available online at: [www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org)

The final version will contain a full thematic index, yet not available.

Please send comments and feedback to the ISDR Secretariat: [isdr@un.org](mailto:isdr@un.org) or [molinvaldes@un.org](mailto:molinvaldes@un.org), or by mail to the ISDR Secretariat (see address below).

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