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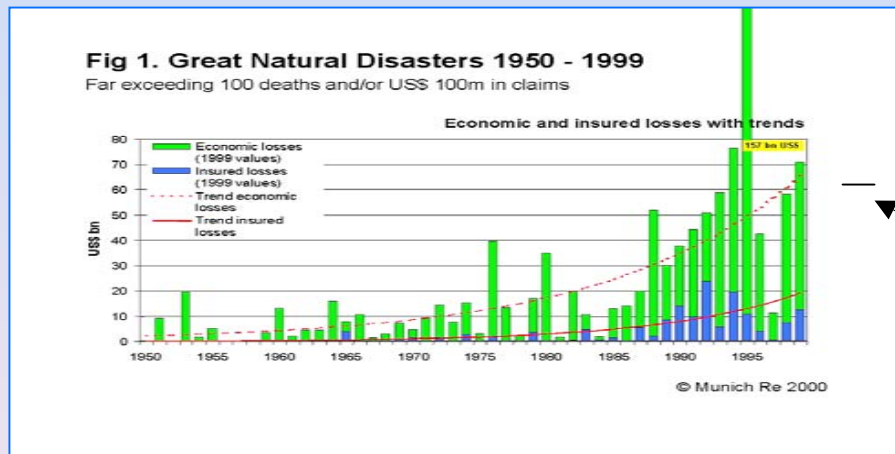
# Disaster Risk Reduction and Early Warning

*Reid Basher, UN Secretariat of the ISDR, Geneva, [www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org)*

- ❑ Disaster risks - rising and changing
- ❑ A systematic approach to reducing risks
- ❑ The UN's strategy - the ISDR
- ❑ A broader concept of early warning
- ❑ Broadcasting and journalism roles?

# Disaster risks - rising and changing (1)

- ❑ Five-fold rise in disaster over 1960s -1990s
- ❑ Mostly hydro-meteorological origins
- ❑ Poor people and countries most affected
- ❑ Loss of life versus loss of assets
- ❑ Major handicap to development



*In 2003, natural catastrophes resulted in more than 50,000 deaths and over US\$ 60 B in economic losses*  
Source: Munich Re

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## Disaster risks - rising and changing (2)

*The reasons? Disasters require a vulnerable population*

- ❑ More people and poor people in risky situations
- ❑ Unsafe development: floodplain settlement, coastal exploitation, mega-city growth, unsafe houses, wetland destruction, river channeling, deforestation, soil erosion and fertility decline
- ❑ Exacerbated by poverty and disease, conflict and population displacement

*Growing disasters are a sign of unsustainable development*

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## Disaster risks - rising and changing (3)

*Climate change\* not the main source of the disaster rise*

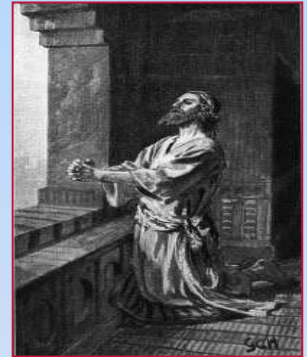
- ❑ But IPCC projected changes in the weather hazards associated with disasters are mostly negative
- ❑ Observed rises in temperatures and sea levels and some increases in rainfall intensities – may be already playing a role in some disasters
- ❑ Large uncertainties – situation may be *worse* than predicted – climate change is major threat

*(\* Where “climate change” is as defined by the UNFCCC - caused by humans.)*

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# Changing views of climate and disasters

- ❑ *The pre-science era* - spiritual/religious, omens, fatalism, disasters as punishment or “acts of the divine”
- ❑ *The stability and statistics era, 19<sup>th</sup> C onward* - Climate seen as stable, data series as powerful basis for risk management, the “100-year” event
- ❑ *The global climate system era, post 1970* - Satellites show “climate system”, global monitoring, computer models reveal climate change, ENSO, seasonal forecasts
- ❑ *Current era of change and uncertainty* - Climate change, natural fluctuations (e.g. 1970s Sahel), disasters a growing concern, high stakes, growing human vulnerability



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# A systematic approach to reducing risks

*Since disasters are a human phenomenon, we can change our ways to reduce our risks*

- ❑ Shift the focus from hazards to risk management
- ❑ Understand the nature of the risks - both the hazards and the vulnerabilities
- ❑ Put in place the tools and methods to assess, predict, ameliorate, and respond to risk,
- ❑ Ensure strong political support, administrative capacity and community engagement

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# The UN's strategy - the ISDR

- ❑ The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction: the follow-up to IDNDR, centerpiece of UN efforts
- ❑ Coordinated international effort to reduce risks
- ❑ Inter-Agency Task Force (UN, regional and civil society organizations)
- ❑ A vehicle for stimulating and coordinating action
- ❑ Secretariat roles: Policy development, Advocacy, Information, and Partnerships

*On December 10, 2003, the UN General Assembly passed two detailed resolutions calling on governments and UN agencies to work more actively to reduce the risks of disasters.*

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## Some highlights of ISDR activities

- ❑ Disaster risk reduction recognized in the WSSD and its Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Also promoted in other forums (e.g. UNFCCC COP-9, World Urban Forum, WWF-3)
- ❑ Regional outreach programs Africa (based in Nairobi) and Latin America and Caribbean (San Jose).
- ❑ Products: “Living with Risk”, a compendium of worldwide disaster risk reduction experience; Framework for monitoring and guiding risk reduction policy and practice; Review of progress on Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World
- ❑ IATF working groups on early warning, vulnerability, wildfire management, drought. Major conference on early warning in Bonn, 2003 has led to new ISDR office in Bonn.
- ❑ Strong WMO involvement – e.g. El Niño advisories, water risks World Met and Water Days, new WMO programme on disasters

# The International Conference on Early Warning, 16-18 October 2003, Bonn

- ❑ The goal – integrating early warning of disasters into public policy
- ❑ Regional preparatory meetings, multiple stakeholders
- ❑ Five focus areas agreed, including better data collection and forecasting, capacity building and people-centered warning systems
- ❑ German offer to support new ISDR-led platform to sustain necessary partnership action (now underway)
- ❑ See [www.ewc2.org](http://www.ewc2.org) for outcomes and reports

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# A broader view of risk factors, a wider time frame

*How to provide early warning and foresight of ... Declining environmental state?  
Risk-raising development projects? Social communications and capacity  
weaknesses? Trends in markets, prices, migration, conflict, health vulnerability?*

<u>Element</u>	<u>Day-Week-Month-Year-Decade</u>				
Weather, tides, floods, soils	<b>XXXX</b>			<b>XXX</b>	
Reservoirs, snow pack			<b>XXXXXXXXXX</b>		
People exposed, conflict, migration			<b>XXXXXXX</b>		
Crop production, food prices			<b>XXXXXXX</b>		
Food reserves, food aid				<b>XXXXXXX</b>	
Environmental management					<b>XXXXXXXXXX</b>
Industry, urban, infrastructure design					<b>XXXXXXXXXX</b>
Land use planning					<b>XXXXXXX</b>

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# Disaster Roles for NHMS and WMO - strategy

*Play to strengths ...*

- ❑ Understanding of climate system and climate variability
- ❑ Observations and data analysis skills, assessment of risks
- ❑ Modeling, prediction, early warning products
- ❑ International coordination and networks



*Work hard on ...*

- ❑ Integrative, systematic, risk management approaches
- ❑ Engaging in social policies and institutional processes
- ❑ Networking and partnership approaches
- ❑ Widening the perspective; seeking new roles and skills

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# World Conference on Disaster Reduction

Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, 18-22 January, 2005



- ❑ A new decadal thrust to cut disasters and integrate risk reduction into sustainable development agenda
- ❑ Review of progress on the 1994 Yokohama Strategy
- ❑ Intergovernmental process to develop new plan
- ❑ Thematic sessions to support plan's content
- ❑ Public sessions and events
- ❑ Commemoration of tenth anniversary of Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake
- ❑ See website [www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org)

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# Broadcasting and journalism roles?

- ❑ Seeing the bigger picture
- ❑ Raising awareness of risks (hazards and vulnerabilities) in advance – there are no surprises
- ❑ Promoting prevention and preparedness
- ❑ In crises – authoritative, understandable timely information, knowing what to do.
- ❑ Capitalizing on events to learn and build in more resilience, not re build the risks
- ❑ Make use of WCDR

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# Disaster reduction and NHMS - conclusions

- ❑ Intolerable impacts of growing disasters, and looming issue of climate change
- ❑ New thinking on disaster risk and its social context
- ❑ A strong need for active collaboration to reduce disaster – e.g. through the World Conference on Disaster Reduction

