

2005

Second Announcement

World Conference on Disaster Reduction

18-22 January 2005
Kobe, Hyogo, Japan

A safer world for all
www.unisdr.org/wcdr

A milestone event to

increase the international profile of disaster risk reduction

*promote integration of disaster risk reduction into
development planning and practice*

*strengthen local and national capacities to address the
causes of disasters that continue to devastate and
impede the development of many countries.*

*A set of specific goals, activities and policy measures for implementation
2005-2015 will be presented for consideration and adoption, drawing on
a review of the past decade's progress with the Yokohama Strategy and
Plan of Action for a Safer World that was adopted at the first world
conference on the subject held at Yokohama, May 1994, during the
International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR)*



United Nations

World Conference on Disaster Reduction

18-22 January 2005, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan

1 The World Conference on Disaster Reduction: an opportunity for action

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The World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) is a milestone event to increase the profile of disaster risk reduction in development planning and practice. The Conference will provide a unique opportunity to promote a strategic and systematic approach at the national level to address vulnerabilities and to reduce risk to natural hazards.

Commitment to the reduction of disasters has been growing although actual materialization is still slow. Human and economic losses due to natural disasters continue to rise and remain as a major obstacle to sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). New risks are emerging. The WCDR is expected to guide and motivate governments and their policy makers to pay more attention to such vital issues, identifying practical ways to incorporate risk reduction measures into action to reduce poverty.

The Conference will build on the findings of the review of the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action of 1994¹, aiming at:

- Assessing achievements and identifying good practices;
- Defining the remaining challenges, critical needs and opportunities in disaster reduction initiatives worldwide and examining emerging issues; and,
- Developing a set of objectives and areas of action for disaster risk reduction to implement the objectives of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation for Sustainable Development, as essential conditions to achieve the relevant Millennium Development Goals (MDG's).

The Conference is scheduled to be held on 18-22 January 2005 in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan and will take place immediately after the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake which struck Kobe and its neighbouring area in the early hours on 17 January 1995, killing more than 6,400 people and injuring about 40,000.

¹ The World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction was held in Yokohama, Japan in 1994. Since then the "Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation" and its Plan of Action have served as the international blueprint in the field of disaster reduction. The review of the achievements, gaps and critical challenges facing the international community since its adoption is currently underway and will be presented at the Conference.



2 Expected outcome

Based on the objectives set out by the General Assembly, the main outcome of the Conference is foreseen in the following areas:

- Increased awareness, recognition and political endorsement for implementing disaster risk reduction and mobilizing local, national and international resources.
- Clearer directions and priorities for action at international, regional, national and local levels to ensure implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and to support the achievement of the objectives of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals.
- Adoption of a set of goals and policy measures to guide and stimulate the implementation of disaster risk reduction, both on what to achieve and 'how-to-do' risk reduction.
- Launching of specific initiatives and partnerships to support the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

3 Preparatory Process

The preparation of the Conference is supported by the following mechanisms:

The United Nations General Assembly through its resolution A/RES/58/214, has requested the ISDR secretariat to serve as the secretariat of the Conference; a special unit for WCDR has been established, coordinating the preparations of the World Conference.

A Bureau consisting of five representatives of Member States elected on the basis of equitable geographical representation and the host country as an ex-officio member², has been fully functional and is leading the discussion in reviewing the organizational and substantive preparations for the Conference. The first session of the open-ended intergovernmental preparatory committee took place in Geneva in May 2004, following the ninth session of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction. (summary report available at <http://www.iisd.ca/isdr/wcdr/prepcom1/>). The second session of the Preparatory Committee is scheduled for 11-12 October 2004 in Geneva and possibly a third meeting will take place immediately prior to the conference. Between the Preparatory Committee sessions, a number of consultations are planned under the guidance of the Bureau members.

The Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) serves as a vehicle to support substantive discussions at the WCDR. The ninth IATF/DR session in May 2004 in Geneva reviewed the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World of 1994, and discussed extensively the proposed elements for the programme outcome of the WCDR. With a view to providing specific guidance on the substantive work of the Conference, a working group has also been established by the Task Force.

The discussions held in a number of regional and thematic meetings organized by partner agencies in a variety of locations are contributing to the preparatory process from their relevant perspectives. They provide inputs to the review of achievements and lessons learnt on disaster risk reduction; identifying areas that need to be addressed; proposing elements for future action. The list of regional and thematic meetings as well as a compilation of their outcomes is available on the WCDR website.

The ISDR secretariat is undertaking an on-line dialogue from 15 June to 15 July 2004 to discuss priority areas for further action to implement disaster risk reduction 2005-2015. The outcome of the discussion is expected to contribute directly to the review of the Yokohama Strategy and indirectly to the intergovernmental consultations. The outcome will be made available on the WCDR website.

² The Bureau is composed of the following members: Ecuador representing Latin American and Caribbean States (Chair), Federal Republic of Germany representing Western Europe and Others Group, Islamic Republic of Iran representing Asian States (Rapporteur), Morocco representing African States, Russian Federation representing Eastern European States and Japan (ex-officio & Co-Chair).

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4 Format of the Conference

The WCDR will be composed of three main processes, namely an intergovernmental segment; a thematic segment for knowledge exchange; and a forum for public participation. The Conference will take place in the Portopia Hotel and the adjoining International Conference Center, Kobe and the Kobe International Exhibition Halls, in Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture.

4.1 Intergovernmental segment

The Intergovernmental segment will provide the venue for delegates to make statements, to discuss and negotiate on the outcomes of the Conference for final adoption. In addition to the Plenary Hall (Ohwada Room, Portopia Hotel), a Main Committee Room (Kairaku Room) will be allocated for negotiation and drafting purposes. Rooms will be available to delegations for bilateral and group consultations upon request to the WCDR secretariat.

4.2 Thematic segment

Coordinated by the WCDR secretariat, the thematic segment is intended to complement the discussions on the programme outcome at the intergovernmental level, with the following particular focuses³:

- to exchange experiences and good practices in order to enhance the implementation of the programme outcome, as well as to identify issues requiring further discussion at international, regional, national, and community levels; and,
- to launch specific initiatives or partnerships to support the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, as well as to facilitate networking and exchange of information between partners and organization.

³ Organizers of events that do not serve these specific objectives may wish to consider using the facilities of the Public Forum (see the section on Public Forum).

The Thematic segment will consist of three high-level round tables and a number of parallel sessions clustered under five themes, as well as a regional session.

High Level Round Tables

The High Level Round Tables will address themes identified by the Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action, that require greater political commitment, media visibility and high level participation in the form of an open discussion with Governments and partners. In particular, the identified themes correspond to key challenges and emerging issues of the disaster risk reduction agenda which require special attention.

The three themes are:

1) Disaster Risk: The Next Development Challenge

Sustainable development is threatened by increasing disasters. Development practices and investments need to systematically take into account the risk of natural and related hazards. Heads of development programmes and financial institutions, as well as a Government Minister and a Mayor from a major city will provide their views on how to meet this challenge.

2) Learning to Live with Risk

Education, professional training, and the exchange of information are one of the most powerful forces to cut disaster risk. Heads of key international organizations, leading scholars and a Government Minister will discuss what is required, at the start of the decade on education for sustainable development, to expand educational and training processes to develop a broad culture of prevention.

3) Emerging Risks: What Will Tomorrow Hold?

Climate change, deforestation, rapid urbanisation, and spreading diseases are among the many examples of emerging trends that demonstrate the growing consequences of disaster risks. Heads of agencies and leading experts in these fields will consider the implications for decision makers.

The three High Level Round Tables are tentatively scheduled in the Plenary Hall on 18 and 19 January 2005. Each round table will be opened by a recognised



keynote speaker, followed by a panel discussion with Heads of Delegations, Heads of Agencies, community leaders and experts.

Thematic Sessions

The proposed parallel sessions will be directly related to the outcome of the Conference and the issues being discussed in the intergovernmental process. They will be clustered together under five themes identified as the priority areas of work for the next ten years through the Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action as well as through consultations with partners. These clusters will be formulated in such a manner to correspond closely with the five key objectives, priorities and targeted actions that will be the subjects for discussion at the intergovernmental segment.

A panel, representing key organizations carrying out activities related to the theme, and country representatives, will open each of the five thematic clusters. The Thematic Clusters will be chaired by government representatives. The chairs will be supported in the preparation and in the running of the Thematic Cluster by Agencies and Organizations that have expressed specific commitments in this regard (see the list below). Each Thematic Cluster will then break up into a number of sessions running in parallel. The list of proposed themes appears in the box.

1. **Governance: institutional and policy frameworks for risk reduction**
(UNDP, UN-HABITAT, UNV, ProVention Consortium)
2. **Risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning**
(WMO, EC/JRC⁴, UNU)
3. **Knowledge management and education: building a culture of resilient communities**
(UNESCO, IFRC, UNICEF)
4. **Reducing the underlying risk factors**
(UNEP, WHO, UNCRD)
5. **Preparedness for effective response**
(OCHA, WFP)

Session organizers will be requested to report

⁴ EC/JRC: Joint Research Centre, Directorate-General, European Commission

Proposed Themes for Parallel Sessions (not an exhaustive list)

1. **Governance: institutional and policy frameworks for risk reduction**
 - Socio-economic policies and effective utilization of resources (linking to poverty eradication, private and public resources)
 - Environmental policies (integration into existing environmental policies and management practices)
 - Risk reduction and sustainable development
 - National policies, institutional developments and legislation, national coordination
 - Local authorities and municipality policies for risk reduction
 - Community action and participation
 - Regional institutional frameworks and policies
 - Financial institutions' policies to promote and support risk reduction
 - Transparency - accountability
 - Indicators and indexing to support progress and performance
2. **Risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning**
 - Hazard and vulnerability assessments - methodologies
 - Disaster impact assessments and methodologies
 - Forecasting and early warning - communicating risk
 - Space technology and disaster reduction
 - Vulnerability and capacity assessments at local level
 - Climate and environmental risk assessment
 - Management of Natechs and other emerging systemic risks
 - Data-collection and information use to reduce risk
 - Urban risk - an increasing concern
 - Drought
3. **Knowledge management and education: building a culture of resilient communities**
 - Education for sustainable development - disaster risk reduction in schools
 - Disaster risk reduction at university and postgraduate levels
 - Research agendas
 - Training: formal and informal (community action)
 - Media and disaster risk reduction - public awareness raising tools
 - The voice of the civil society in disaster risk reduction
4. **Reducing the underlying risk factors**
 - Rebuilding safer communities - sustainable solutions in recovery and reconstruction
 - Land use planning
 - Safety nets and livelihoods approaches to reduce risk
 - Insurance - financial instruments - micro finance
 - Safer construction - compliance with codes (cases and lessons-learned)
 - Business and private sector investing in disaster risk reduction
 - Environmental management and risk reduction
 - Community action: where it has worked
 - Gender issues and disaster risk reduction
 - Health and risk reduction
5. **Preparedness for effective response**
 - From relief to development
 - Disaster response and response preparedness mechanisms in the context of disaster reduction
 - Strengthening preparedness: linking early warning to effective response
 - Financing the real cost of disaster response
 - Development of response tools through non-traditional partnerships
 - Prevention, preparedness and response to environmental emergencies

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back on the outcome of the discussion to the chairperson, who will then compile and summarize the discussions and report to the Plenary. It is also expected that a separate report will be published, compiling the information (e.g. lessons learnt and good practices) shared in the parallel sessions, to serve as a guide for others to learn from past experiences.

Agencies, governments, NGO's and other partners who are accredited to the WCDR are invited to organise sessions that will contribute to the Thematic Segment under one of the five proposed themes. As interest in the sessions is high and the number of rooms at the venue is limited, partners planning sessions on similar topics are encouraged to collaborate closely and as much as possible, to organise joint sessions. Preference will be given to events that are organized jointly by governmental, non-governmental and intergovernmental partners. The WCDR secretariat will facilitate the collaboration between session organizers.

The size and the format of each parallel session (panel discussion, presentation, round table, question and answer session) are for the session convenor to decide. The WCDR secretariat will provide the information as to the capacity and equipment of the allocated room. The venue with standard equipment (microphones, projector, screen) is free of charge. Interpretation services will be at the charge of the convenor of the session.

Regional Session

In addition to the five thematic discussions, a Regional Session will take place in the Plenary Hall, allowing for an exchange of experience and lessons learned from each region. That session is tentatively scheduled for 21 January 2005 in the afternoon.

The consolidated programme will be prepared by the WCDR secretariat in advance of the Conference and put on the WCDR website.

4.3 Public forum

The public form will consist of 1) Workshops; 2) Exhibition booths; 3) Poster Session; and 4) NGO Center. They provide an opportunity to promote organizations' own activities through poster, video and film sessions and public exhibition and to engage in open debates, seminars and a variety of events. Organizers may include governments, NGOs, technical institutions, and private sector. No special status through accreditation will be required to organize such events. Groups wishing to organize events under the Public Forum are able to apply on-line at the WCDR website. This forum will be open to the general public (particularly school and university students) and Conference participants. It will take place in the immediate vicinity of the Conference's intergovernmental and thematic segments, in the International Conference Centre, Kobe and in the Kobe International Exhibition Hall.

The detailed programme will be prepared in advance of the Conference and put on the WCDR website.



5 Registration of Member States and United Nations agencies

Delegates and observers wishing to participate in the World Conference on Disaster Reduction are requested to inform the WCDR secretariat of the composition of their delegation, by sending an official letter from their highest authorities and an individual Conference Registration Form duly filled for each delegate to the WCDR secretariat (E-mail: isdr-wcdr@un.org or Fax No: + 41 (0)22 917 0169. The registration will start on 15 October and close on 30 November 2004. The form is available (in English and French) on the WCDR website.

A UN ground pass will be delivered by the UN Security and Identification Section at the Portopia Hotel **upon presentation of the original registration form and a valid identification document (ID, passport, driving license, etc.)** A courtesy badges can be requested for spouses. The pass will be made available to all registered delegates four days ahead of the meeting, i.e., 14 January 2005.

Delegates and observers are informed that they will have access to the meetings of the Intergovernmental segment and Thematic segment **only upon presentation of a UN ground pass.**

6 Participation of IGOs and NGOs

6.1 Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs)

Accredited IGOs

If your organization is in the list of IGOs and other entities having received invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and work of the General Assembly and ECOSOC, your organization will be able to register and participate in the process of the WCDR as observers. Please follow the same registration procedure described above for the delegates (please see 5.0 Registration of Member States and United Nations agencies). If you are not sure of your organization's accreditation status, please check the list available on the WCDR website.

Non-accredited IGOs

IGOs without consultative status with the United Nations can submit an application to the WCDR secretariat. The application will be reviewed against the existing criteria. The IGO interested in applying for accreditation purposes should send the following information to the WCDR secretariat:

- (1) Name of the organization and pertinent contact information, including address and main contact;
- (2) A list of the members of the governing body of the organization;
- (3) A description of the membership of the organization, indicating the total number of member countries;
- (4) A copy of the constitution and/or by-laws of the organization.

After receipt of the required information, the WCDR secretariat will make recommendations to the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee, for its endorsement on their accreditation to participate in the process of the WCDR. Once accredited, please follow the same registration procedure described above in 5.0. **Such accreditation will be limited solely to the WCDR process.**

Applications for accreditation must be received **no later than 31 August 2004** and addressed to:

WCDR secretariat

UN/ISDR

Palais des Nations, CH-1211

Geneva 10, Switzerland

Tel: + 41-22-917-2759 Fax: + 41-22-917-0169

E-mail: isdr-wcdr@un.org

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6.2 Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other major groups

Accreditation

Any non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other major groups **MUST** be accredited to participate in the process of the World Conference (to observe the Intergovernmental Process and to participate in and observe the Thematic Segment). (If you are interested in participating in the Public Forum of the WCDR only, you do not need to go through this accreditation process. Please see the section of the Public Forum in this Announcement).

Accredited NGOs

Accredited NGOs and other major groups are those, which fall under the categories below. They can register to attend and contribute to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (please see the section on Registration below). You can check your organization's accreditation status on the WCDR website.

- Those in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council as NGOs;
- Those on the Roster of the Commission on Sustainable Development;
- Those which participated in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (Yokohama, Japan, 1994); and,
- Those that are members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, or one of its working groups.

Non-Accredited NGOs

Non-accredited NGOs and other major groups need to go through the accreditation process (if you are interested in participating in the Public Forum of the WCDR only, you do not need to go through this accreditation process. Please see the section of the Public Forum in this Announcement.)

The required information for accreditation applications should be submitted by **31 August 2004** to the WCDR secretariat which, in consultation with United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service and relevant others, as appropriate, will review the requirements including relevance of the work of the applicants on the basis of their background and involvement in disaster reduction issues. If the evaluation shows, on the basis of the information

provided, that the applicant organization is legitimate for the stated purposes and its activities relevant to the work of the Conference, the WCDR secretariat will make recommendations to the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee, for its endorsement on accreditation to participate in the process of the WCDR. **Such accreditation will be limited solely to the WCDR process.**

The application for accreditation requires submission of the following information:

- a) Name of the organization and pertinent contact information, including address and main contact;
- b) Purpose of the organization;
- c) Programmes and activities of the organization in areas relevant to the subject of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction indicating in which country or countries they are carried out;
- d) Confirmation of the activities of the organization at the national, regional or international levels;
- e) Copies of annual or other reports of the organization, with financial statements and a list of financial sources and contributions, including governmental contributions;
- f) A list of the members of the governing body of the organization and their countries of nationality (for international organizations);
- g) A description of the membership of the organization, indicating the total number of members, the names of organizations that are members and their geographical distribution;
- h) A copy of the constitution and/or by-laws of the organization;
- i) A completed registration form of individual representatives whom your organization will be sending (form available on the WCDR website)

Applications for accreditation must be received **no later than 31 August 2004** and addressed to:
WCDR secretariat
UN/ISDR
Palais des Nations, CH-1211
Geneva 10, Switzerland
Tel: + 41-22-917-2759 Fax: + 41-22-917-0169
E-mail: isdr-wcdr@un.org



7 Application for organizing events

Registration

Accredited and newly accredited NGOs through the accreditation process endorsed in the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee will be able to register to send representatives to the WCDR (to observe the Intergovernmental Segment and to participate in the Thematic Segment). The registration form needs to be filled out and sent to the WCDR secretariat along with the official letter from your highest authority mentioning the list of your representatives by 30 November 2004 (e-mail: isdr-wcdr@un.org, or fax: + 41-22-917-0169). The registration form is available on the WCDR website.

Once the registration form is received and the accreditation status is checked by the WCDR secretariat, a confirmation message will be sent through e-mail or fax, which also serves as an official invitation to the meeting and can be used to apply for a visa to Japan. Each representative is responsible for contacting the nearest Japanese Embassy for obtaining an entry visa.

A copy of the individual registration form together with photo identification should be presented in order to obtain a UN ground pass (please see following section).

UN ground pass for entry to WCDR site

The issuance of an UN ground pass to registered representatives will start four days prior (14 January 2005) to the opening of the WCDR at the NGO Registration Office in the Portopia Hotel. A copy of the individual registration form together with photo identification should be presented in order to obtain a UN ground pass. A UN ground pass is not required if access is limited to the venue of the Public Forum only.

7.1 Thematic segment

Participants interested in organising a session in the Thematic Segment of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) must submit an on-line proposal, using the Thematic Session Request Form and attaching a detailed description of the proposed event, including its thematic focus, speakers/presenters and its potential contribution to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR).

Application form and guidelines are available at www.unisdr.org/wcdr. Application must be submitted on-line by **31 August 2004**.

7.2 Public forum

The Public Forum is to be held as part of the UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) in Hyogo, Japan. This forum, which is open to the public, will include Workshops, Exhibition Booths and Poster Session on disaster reduction hosted by entities based in and outside Japan.

Application form and guidelines are available at www.unisdr.org/wcdr. Application must be submitted on-line by **31 August 2004**.

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8 General information

Dates

18 January (Tuesday) - 22 January (Saturday), 2005

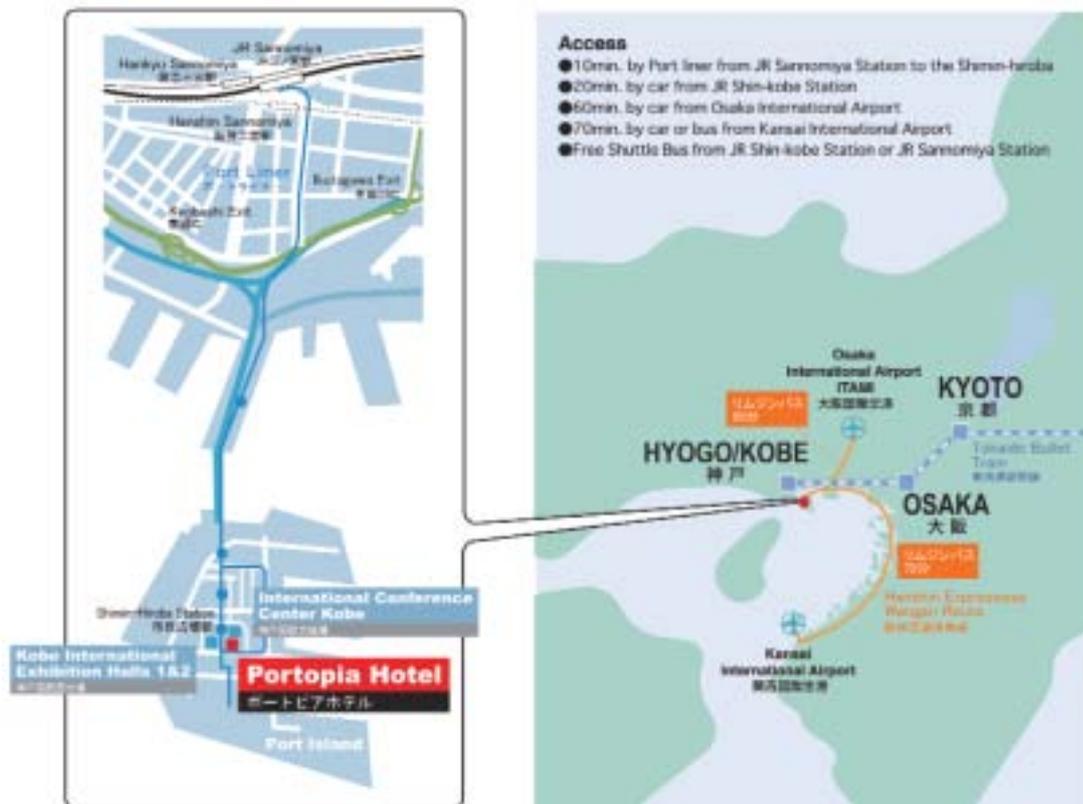
Conference Venue

"KOBE PORTOPIA HOTEL"

10-1, 6chome, Minatojima Nakamachi, Chuo-ku, Kobe, 650-0046, Japan

10 min. by Port Liner from JR Sannomiya Station to Shimin-Hiroba Station

Access



Transportation from Kansai International Airport to Kobe Portopia Hotel

Shuttle Bus Service

Between 17 and 22 January 2005, a free Shuttle Bus Service will be provided between designated hotels and the conference venue. Time schedule of the Shuttle Bus will be communicated later on.

Free Shuttle Bus Service from Kansai International Airport to Kobe Portopia Hotel will be available for WCDR participants. Time schedule of shuttle will be communicated later on.

Transportation by Car

70 minutes from Kansai International Airport. (Taxi fare: approximately 23,000 yen)

*Please note that it may take longer when the traffic is congested.



Transportation by commercial Bus

Limousine bus to Sannomiya Station is available from the airport.

60 minutes from Kansai International Airport. (Bus fare: 1,800yen)

Courtesy bus which connects Sannomiya Station and Kobe Portopia Hotel is available. (10 min.)

Accommodation

A sufficient number of rooms have been reserved at different hotels in and around Kobe. Information regarding hotels and reservation is available on the WCDR website.

Conference Information Desk and Documentation

Conference Information Desk

To facilitate smooth organization of the WCDR, the Conference Information Desk will be established in Kobe Portopia Hotel. Contact telephone numbers will be made available on the WCDR website.

Documentation Table

There will be an opportunity to promote the initiatives and present relevant documentation in front of the main Plenary Hall during the Conference. A space comprising a table and a panel will be available for half a day per each agency. Modalities for display need to be checked at the WCDR secretariat.

Agencies wishing to send relevant documents in advance of the Conference should contact the WCDR secretariat.

Business Center for Delegations

The Business Center for delegations is located in Portopia Hotel. Photocopy machines, computers and access to the Internet will be available free of charge.

Other useful information

Passport and Visas

A valid passport is required to enter Japan. In addition, some foreign nationals require a visa. It is required to contact the Japanese Embassy, Consulate or diplomatic mission in your country preferably three months before your departure for Japan. The WCDR secretariat will not be in a position to process the visa applications.

As of May 2004, citizens of the following countries are not required to obtain visas for a stay of 3 months, or 90 days or less. Since there are occasional changes in the attached list, please check the current situation at any Japanese Embassy or Consulate in your country. A list of countries with visa exemption arrangements with Japan is available on the WCDR website.

Insurance

The Japanese Government can take no responsibility for medical or travel insurance for participants. It is strongly recommended that participants make arrangements for the necessary insurance coverage.

Climate

It is usually cold in Hyogo in January. Participants are advised to bring warm clothing. Average temperature in Hyogo in January is 5.2 degrees centigrade (41.36F), with daily high of 8.9°C (48F) and a daily low of 2.0°C (35F).

Currency, Credit Cards, Travelers' Cheques

The official Japanese currency is the yen. Most credit cards are accepted in major hotels, certain stores and certain restaurants. Foreign currencies and traveler's checks may be accepted at major hotels but only a very limited number of restaurants and shops. It is recommended to exchange foreign currency to Japanese yen at foreign exchange banks, where presentation of a passport will be required.

Following currency will be accepted at Portopia Hotel for exchange into Japanese Yen : AUD, British Pound, CAD, Euro, Swiss Franc, and USD.

*Please note that banks are open only on weekdays between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. It is possible to use credit cards at ATMs (Automatic Teller Machines) located at most major banks between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. on weekdays, and 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekends and holidays.

Electricity

In Japan, the voltage of the main power supply is 100V and the frequency is 50/60 Hz. Electrical plugs are A-type.

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Taxis

The fare consists of an initial flag-down price of approximately 660 yen plus an additional cost per distance covered and time elapsed. Payment is made at the end of the ride, and you need to pay the amount marked on the meter (tipping is not necessary). Most taxi drivers do not speak any foreign language. Trains and buses are recommended as an inexpensive means of transport. Generally, taxi stations are located in front of the hotels and train stations.

Time Zone

Japan time is nine hours ahead of GMT in January.

Tipping / VAT

Tipping is not required in Japan. Usually, a five percent VAT is added. In some cases, such as in exclusive restaurants, bars and hotels, a ten percent service charge may be added to your bill.

Travel Information Desk

Travel Information desks will be available for participants at Kansai International Airport, Shin-Kobe Station, Portopia Hotel and some major designated hotels .

Kansai International Airport and Shin-Kobe Station

Information Desks at Kansai International Airport and Shin-Kobe Station will provide information regarding access to the conference venue in Kobe.

Portopia Hotel

Information Desk at Portopia Hotel will provide information on restaurants, sight seeing tours, ticket reconfirmation, and other travel related issues.

Postal Services

Basic postage and mailing services is available at Portopia Hotel. Post offices outside the Hotel are open daily from 9:00 to 17:00 except Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

Newspapers

English language newspapers (Japan Times and Herald Tribune) can be purchased in the Portopia Hotel.

Emergency Care System

First Aid

First aid facility for delegations, located in the Portopia Hotel, will be operating during the course of the conference.

Emergency Hospital

Kobe City General Hospital

4-6, Minatojima Nakamachi, Chuo-ku, Kobe, 650-0046, Japan

Tel: + 81-(0)78-302-4321 Fax: + 81-(0)78-302-7537

Emergency Numbers

Dial 110 for Police.

Dial 119 for Fire and Medical Emergency.

Other facilities in Portopia Hotel

Further information on restaurants and other facilities in the Portopia Hotel are available on the WCDR website.

WCDR-related events

Receptions

- 18 January 2005 (tentative) - Hosted by Japanese Government:
To welcome participants of World Conference on Disaster Reduction, the Japanese Government will organize a reception on the first day of the Conference. The venue, time, the number of persons to be invited from each delegation will be made available on the WCDR website.
- 20 January 2005 (tentative) - Hosted by the Hyogo Cooperation Committee:
To welcome participants of World Conference on Disaster Reduction, the Hyogo Cooperation Committee will organize a reception on the third day of the Conference. The venue, time, the number of persons to be invited from each delegation will be made available on the WCDR website.

Study Tours

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction will be held in Hyogo in the year of the tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. In conjunction with this international conference, a study tour (free of charge) will be organized, inviting conference participants from various parts of the



world to visit major locations associated with the earthquake such as Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution and the Nojima Fault Museum and to understand how the area was stricken by the earthquake and has recovered from its destruction. Further details will be made available on the WCDR website.

Optional Excursion

On 23 January 2005, a day trip will be offered to some of the most popular tourist attractions in the Hyogo prefecture, where interested participants can discover the "real" Japan. (Participants are requested to pay for a portion of the expenses.) Further details will be made available on the WCDR website.

Programs for accompanying persons

Short trips will be offered during the conference to major sightseeing spots in the city where participants can enjoy shopping and cultural programs that provide hands-on experience of Japanese culture and traditional craftsmanship. Further details will be made available on the WCDR website.

Events hosted by the local organization in relation to the Tenth Anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake

Memorial Ceremony for the Tenth Anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake (1.17 Hyogo Memorial Walk)

On 17 January 2005, the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake will be organized, by holding a memorial ceremony and a memorial event, "Yamate Fureai Road Walk," in which participants will walk together along the Yamate Road (Yamate Fureai Road) that has been designated as an evacuation and rescue route during times of emergency. Both the ceremony and event are designed to raise public awareness of the importance of disaster preparedness.

Date and time: 17 January 2005 (Monday),
07:30 - 15:00 (tentative)

Venue: Kobe City

Major events:

1. Memorial Ceremony
A time of mourning for over six thousand victims of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake.

The number of participants invited to the ceremony will be limited. Further details will be made available on the WCDR website.

2. Yamate Fureai Road Walk
Participants will walk along the Yamate Road (covering a distance of two to fifteen kilometers), which serves as an evacuation and rescue route during times of emergency. This event is open to all interested individuals. Further details will be made available on the WCDR website.
3. Commemorative Events at the End of the Walk
Several commemorative events will be held at the end of the Road Walk that express citizens' gratitude for the assistance provided by people from all over the world, and to show how Kobe has recovered from the destruction.

1.17 Memorial Gathering in Commemoration of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake

On 17 January 2005, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, Kobe City and citizens of Kobe will jointly organize a memorial event named "the 1.17 Memorial Gathering in commemoration of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake" at the Higashi Yuenchi Park in Chuo-ku, Kobe City and other venues. This event is designed to mourn the victims of the earthquake on the one hand and to renew public awareness of the importance of "mutual aid" and the "value of life," which the earthquake taught us, and to pass on this important lesson to future generations on the other hand.

Dates: Monday 17 January 2005 and other dates around this day

Venues: Higashi Yuenchi Park and other locations in Kobe City and other cities connected with each other through the "1.17 Lights of Hope" network.

Major events:

1. Lighting of bamboo lanterns
Some 6,000 bamboo lanterns will be placed in the shape of 1.17 and candles put in the lanterns will be lit.
2. Memorial gathering in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake
Tables will be placed around the Monument of Victims and Reconstruction in the Higashi Yuenchi Park where participants will sign books

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18-22 January 2005, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan

of condolences and offer flowers to pray for the souls of the earthquake victims.

3. Forum of friendship

Tents will be set up in the Higashi Yuenchi Park, where various commemorative events will be held to pass on the lessons learned from the earthquake to coming generations.

4. Message from Kobe

A message from citizens of Kobe will be sent

nationwide to express citizens' gratitude for the relief assistance given after the earthquake, and to renew public awareness of the importance of disaster preparedness, thereby deepening the ties with the cities all around Japan connected with each other through the "1.17 Lights of Hope" network.

9 For further information

Any enquiries should be addressed to the WCDR secretariat at isdr-wcdr@un.org, indicating the name of the focal point in the title of your message.

- For registration and participation of Delegates and Representatives from Member States, UN Agencies and accredited IGOs - Attention: Ms. Christel Rose
- For non accredited IGOs, NGOs and Public Forum - Attention: Ms. Yuki Matsuoka
- For Thematic Segment - Attention: Mr. John Harding
- For other matters linked to the WCDR - Attention: Ms. Elena Dokhlik

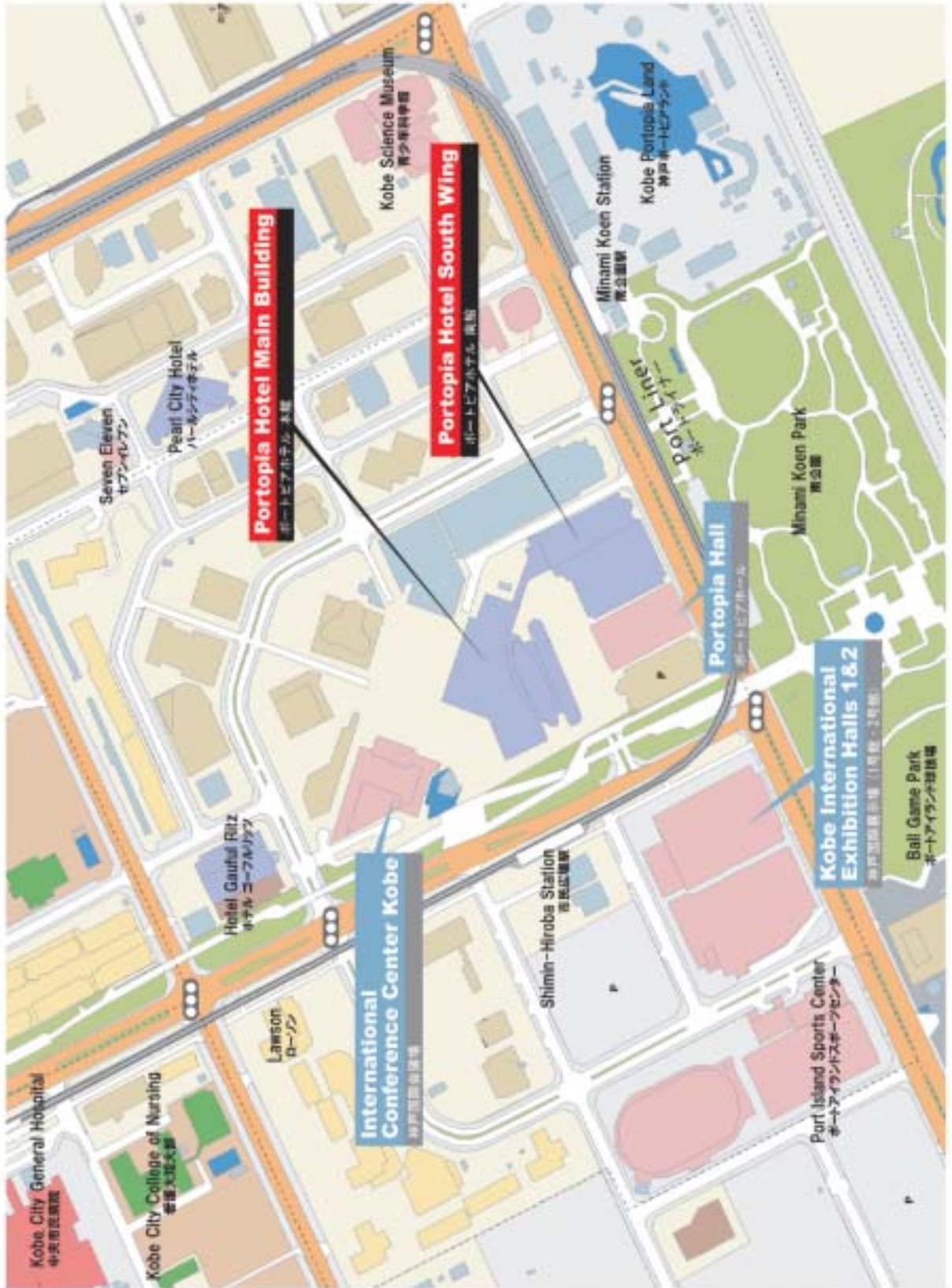
There will be no Third Announcement for WCDR; all updated information will be made available on the WCDR website.

A safer world for all

www.unisdr.org/wcdr



Area Map



For more information contact:



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www.unisdr.org/wcdr

World Conference on Disaster Reduction

ISDR Mission

The ISDR aims at building disaster resilient communities by promoting the importance of disaster reduction as an integral component of sustainable development, to reduce human, social, economic and environmental losses due to natural hazards and related technological and environmental disasters.

ISDR main objectives

- Increase public awareness to reduce risk to natural hazards
- Obtain commitment from public authorities
- Stimulate interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral partnership and expand risk reduction networking at all levels
- Improve further the scientific knowledge of the causes of disasters and the effects of natural hazards and related technological and environmental disasters on societies

Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction

Current members include:
Chaired by the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs

- African Union
- Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC)
- Asian Disaster Reduction Centre (ADRC)
- Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, Catholic University of Lovain (CRED)
- Council of Europe
- Drought Monitoring Centre (Kenya based)
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Global Fire Monitoring Centre
- Iberoamerican Association of Civil Defense and Civil Protection
- Organization of American States
- International Council of Science (ICSU)
- International CIS Council
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- International Telecommunication Union
- Munich Reinsurance
- South Pacific Geosciences Commission (SOPAC)
- UN Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD)
- UN Development Programme (UNDP)
- UN Education, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- UN Environmental Programme (UNEP)
- UN-HABITAT
- UN University
- World Bank
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO)