



Integrated Research on Disaster Risk **addressing the challenge of natural and human-induced environmental hazards**

First Meeting of IRDR Scientific Committee

12-13 May 2009
University of Bergen, Norway

MEETING SUMMARY

Members present:

Gordon McBean (Chair), Omar Darío Cardona, Raymond Chen, Richard Eiser, William Hooke, David Johnston, Michel Lang, Allan Lavell, Maria Patek, Ortwin Renn (part only), Steven Sparks, Astri Suhrke (part only), Kuniyoshi Takeuchi, Coleen Vogel, Angelika Wirtz

Apologies:

Hormoz Modaressi

Ex officio:

Reid Basher (ISDR), Heide Hackmann (ISSC), Howard Moore (ICSU)

Observers:

Deliang Chen (Executive Director ICSU), Leonard Barrie (WMO), Ester Sztejn (NAS-BISO)

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming all those present. He invited participants to successively introduce themselves.

[Brief statements of welcome](#)

Deliang Chen, Executive Director of ICSU and Heide Hackmann, Secretary-General of the International Social Science Council (ISSC) addressed the meeting on behalf of their respective organizations. The importance and timeliness of the establishment of IRDR were stressed by both, as was the overarching need for partnership and integrated research in its implementation. They recognized the broad array of specialist knowledge and expertise provided by the various Members of the Scientific Committee, and the wide experience of the Chair, Prof. Gordon McBean.

[Updating on IRDR sponsorship](#)

The meeting was informed that the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) had confirmed its agreement to join ICSU and ISSC in co-sponsoring IRDR, and the Chair welcomed Reid Basher as ex-officio member of the Committee representing the ISDR Secretariat. The sponsorship role of ICSU, ISSC and ISDR was briefly described. It is likely that the co-sponsorship will become the subject of a memorandum of understanding between the three organizations. UNESCO had repeated its intention to become more involved in the IRDR, but co-sponsorship was still under consideration by the Organization.

NOTE: Report of the ISDR Scientific and Technical Committee to the Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Geneva, 16-19 June 2009 states:

“(iii) Support systematic science programmes

Systematic programmes of scientific research, observations and capacity building should be supported at national, regional and international levels to address current problems and emerging risks such as are identified in this report. The international Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) Programme, which is co-sponsored by ICSU, ISSC, and UNISDR, provides a new and important framework for global collaboration. The ISDR Scientific and Technical Committee should provide strategic guidance on research needs for disaster risk reduction and oversight of progress.”

[Adoption of the Agenda](#)

The revised draft Agenda of the meeting (doc. IRDR-SC 1/3 rev) was approved.

[Presentation on work to date by Planning Group](#)

The Chair gave an illustrated presentation on the history and development of the IRDR programme, beginning with the ICSU Priority Area Assessment on Environment and its Relation to Sustainable Development (2003) and the ICSU Foresight Analysis (2004), which had successively identified natural and human-induced hazards as an important emerging field for research and a priority area for ICSU. In addition, the ICSU Priority Area Assessment on Capacity Building in Science (2005) had subsequently stated that a major challenge was ‘... the widening gap between advancing science and technology and society’s ability to capture and use them’.

In the light of the above, the ICSU Executive Board had decided to appoint an ICSU Scoping Group to consider the establishment of a research programme on Natural and Human-induced Environmental Hazards; this Group reported to the ICSU 28th General Assembly in late 2005. The Assembly endorsed its recommendation that a new programme be developed, it being understood that such an initiative should build on ongoing efforts in the geosciences and biological sciences and must expand well beyond those fields.

A multi-disciplinary Planning Group had been accordingly set up, with Gordon McBean as Chair. The Planning Group had met five times in all, from 2006 to 2008, and on one occasion had hosted a Consultative Forum with potential partners. The Group’s Report (doc. IRDR-SC 1/4) had gone before the ICSU 29th General Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique in October 2008, and it had been unanimously decided by the ICSU membership that a major new, interdisciplinary programme of ten years’ duration, entitled Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (with the acronym IRDR) be established, and that a Scientific Committee for its governance be set up. One month later, in Cape Town, South Africa, the General Assembly of the International Social Science Council had decided that it would co-sponsor IRDR.

The ICSU Executive Board and ISSC Executive Committee had overseen the establishment of the present Scientific Committee and had approved its present membership. Several members of the original Planning Group had been asked to continue to serve on the SC to provide continuity,

counterbalanced by new Committee members bringing experience from various key areas and geographical viewpoints.

The basic premise of the Planning Group had been that, despite all the existing or already planned activities on natural hazards, an integrated research programme on disaster risk reduction, sustained for a decade or more and spread across the various hazards, disciplines and geographical regions, was an imperative. The value added nature of the programme would rest with the close coupling of the natural, socio-economic, health and engineering sciences. Throughout the planning process, issues such as globalization, population growth, poverty and climate change had provided both a backdrop and a foreground.

It had been decided that IRDR would focus on hazards related to geophysical, oceanographic and hydro-meteorological trigger events, in other words: earthquakes; volcanoes; flooding; storms (hurricanes, typhoons); heat waves; droughts and fires; tsunamis; coastal erosion; landslides; aspects of climate change; space weather and impact by near-Earth objects. The effects of human activities on creating or enhancing hazards – for example, through poor land-use practices – would be included. The Programme would only deal with epidemics and other health-related situations where they were consequences of one or more of the above-mentioned events. Technical/industrial hazards and warfare would not be considered *per se*, although parallels might be drawn where appropriate. Technical disasters would only be considered where instances were triggered by natural events.

The legacy of IRDR would be an enhanced capacity around the world to address hazards and make informed decisions on actions to reduce their impacts, such that in ten years, when comparable events occur, there would be a reduction in loss of life, fewer people adversely impacted, and wiser investments and choices made by governments, the private sector and civil society.

S. Sparks was invited to speak on the first of the three research objectives of IRDR, which will involve mostly, but not uniquely, the natural sciences. He underlined the continuing need for a better understanding of hazards and risks. Even in the most studied and documented parts of the World with regard to hazards (e.g. Japan) there are still gaps in our knowledge, while large parts of the world are much poorer off in terms of characterization and monitoring. Overall, there are gaps in methodologies. The importance of space-borne methods of monitoring was underscored.

The key questions within the first two sub-objectives – identifying hazards and vulnerabilities leading to risks, and forecasting hazards and understanding uncertainty – were described. The third sub-objective, on the dynamic modelling of risk, will require integration of knowledge about natural processes and human systems; the programme will need to go beyond the quantitative dimensions to deal also with cultural/social issues.

R. Eiser spoke on Objective 2: Understanding decision-making in complex and changing environments, which included identifying relevant decision-making systems and their interactions, understanding decision-making with respect to hazards, and improving the actual practice of decision making. The need for a broad, social science/cultural approach was stressed. Objective 2 is the feature of IRDR that will be seen as 'making the difference'.

Objective 3 was described by A. Lavell. The central thrust will be to use the combined understanding from the many different fields of expertise into an integrated approach to the understanding of the causes of disaster, to provide practice guidance on the reduction of risk and the curbing of losses. Reality expressed through risk. The relevance of a forensic or diagnostic approach was underlined, as was the need for case studies and demonstration projects (to a common research design and using common template for data collection and analysis) to provide analysis of effective and ineffective approaches to risk reduction.

The Chair emphasized the non-linear and integrated nature of the IRDR programme. There had been some misunderstanding on the part of some participants during the Parallel Session of the previous day within the programme of the World Social Science Forum, when the basic structure of the IRDR had

been described (this was partly due to the numbering of objectives). He described how projects within the programme may cross over into two/three objectives in various ways.

The link between IRDR and ISDR's Global Assessment Report process was described as one example of synergy with existing initiatives. The GAR has provided a valuable information set on global vulnerabilities that will be used as input into the further design of IRDR. In the future, IRDR and its SC could have some role in the development of future GARs. The great challenge of the new programme will be to identify and fill critical gaps and complement existing programmes.

In the general discussion that followed, the following points were made. The IRDR programme 'cannot be all things to everyone. The need for flexibility with time was underlined. The Chair stressed that the programme as described within the Report is not fixed in stone, but may be modified with time.

The difficulty of distinguishing between natural and technological hazards was evoked. As noted in the Science Plan, the IRDR would not consider technical/industrial hazards *per se*, although parallels might be drawn where appropriate. Technical disasters would only be considered where instances were triggered by natural events. Within the Munich Re database a 'technat' is defined as an event where a natural event triggers a technological one. Similar links exist in what might be described as socio-natural hazards. Consideration of their interactions would be important in learning from complex processes. A similar situation exists with health issues. In due course, these foci could be re-visited.

Recognizing that low-intensity, high-recurrence events are of great importance in the context of development in many parts of the world, it is important that an over-emphasis on extreme events be avoided.

The IRDR Science Plan was considered exciting and challenging and viewed positively by the new members of the Committee. However, it was also recognized as having very ambitious aims and a current lack of focus that needed to be rectified. Recommendations included: identification of priorities within the plan; consideration of local contexts within Objective 3 and possible reconfiguration according to needs; the adoption of a more methodological approach; and the involvement of 'real society'.

The relevance of climate change adaptation was underlined by the Chair. The IRDR programme should be ready to take advantage of the emphasis being placed on climate change by governments.

At its 30th Session in Antalya, Turkey, held 21-23 April 2009, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) agreed to a proposal by Norway and ISDR to prepare a Special Report on "Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation". The focus of the report will be a review of disaster risk reduction and management policy and practice, its effectiveness and costs and will be completed by mid 2011. Where possible, new information on the impacts of extreme events will be included but the report's sections on climate science are expected to rely on that presented in the 2007 IPCC Fourth Assessment Report. To support the report's preparation, ISDR intends to stimulate the development of studies and collate available information on disaster risk and on the measures and experience in reducing disaster risk. The value and relevance of this exercise to IRDR (and vice versa) are self-evident, and a close watch will be kept on developments. It is expected that members of the IRDR community will be active in the Assessment.

The Planning Group's guiding principle throughout the planning process had been: where can IRDR make a difference? Integration of the natural, social, medical and engineering sciences is its important feature, as well as integration between research and implementation.

For one member of the Committee the terms of reference of IRDR described in the Report serve to emphasise the programme's 'meta-nature', taking advantage of existing initiatives, actions and programmes. It was suggested that the European Union programmes are very important and need to be taken into consideration.

The Meeting was shown the organisational chart depicting the matrix of partners and interaction at programme level. The links with partners and agreements thereon were described. There is need to

move ahead quite quickly on this. It was agreed that UNEP be added, in recognition of its interest in monitoring and early-warning. Whilst the chart was appreciated, it was felt that some elaboration was needed, especially with regard to the nature of the interactions between the structures and partners (i.e. the arrows).

[Examination of Terms of Reference of IRDR-SC](#)

The Terms of Reference of the Committee as approved by the governing bodies of ICSU and ISSC and set out in document IRDR-SC 1/5 were examined. They gave rise to no discussion.

[Presentation on WMO programmes and IRDR](#)

The meeting benefited from a powerpoint presentation by L. Barrie, representative of WMO, on the research activities of his Organization relevant to IRDR. Emphasis was placed on WMO's World Weather Research Programme (WWRP), which focuses on advancing predictive skill and the utilization of weather information; and understanding and improving prediction of high-impact weather from minutes to seasons (high-impact weather forecasts include, but are not limited to, disasters and other severe weather events). Activities span basic research in the academic community to operational contributions and include long-term coordinated efforts focusing on:

- Research projects of limited duration (Forecast Demonstration Projects (FDPs), Research and Development Projects (RDPs), and field campaigns)
- Expert assessment reports on the current status and future direction of critical research and operational areas
- Organizing international conferences, workshops, symposia and other meetings
- Resource mobilization for world weather research.

Societal research components have been incorporated into WWRP projects to understand and advance the use of weather information (e.g. user needs, decision-making, value of weather information, probabilistic forecasts, uncertainty and risk) and these have been successful to date. The thrusts of the WWRP have strong overlaps with the goals of IRDR.

It was suggested that the Working Group on Societal and Economic Research and Applications (SERA) be the principle point of interaction with IRDR, and collaboration could include the establishment of a joint IRDR-WWRP committee for weather, leading to the development of a concise plan to advance understanding and use of weather products for disasters and other high-impact events. A partnership with WWRP would allow IRDR to gain access to both social research scientists familiar with weather, physical scientists interested in this topic and operational forecast centres. It was felt that a Forecast or Research Demonstration Project involving IRDR could be set up rather quickly.

Action: It was agreed that a joint socio-economic research activity with WMO should be developed under the guidance of a subset of the Committee (G. McBean, C. Vogel, W. Hooke). The terms of reference of such an activity will be developed in collaboration with the SERA Working Group.

A two-location demonstration set-up with, for instance, Pacific and Africa being involved, may be a possibility.

[Financing IRDR](#)

H. Moore presented the inverted pyramid funding schema characteristic of the situation with the earlier ICSU-derived environmental programmes such as WCRP, IGCP, etc. This involved relatively modest seed funding for the planning process, followed by equally modest financial resources from the co-sponsors to allow the Scientific Committee to function, giving rise to research funding of significantly greater magnitude. Funding would flow from donors direct to the research projects and programmes, not through the co-sponsors or the IRDR International Programme Office.

It was agreed that IRDR needs to work with national, international and global providers of funds. The members of the Scientific Committee need to use their existing contacts with funding organizations and bodies to garner interest in IRDR and its potential programme.

The integrated nature of the research proposed within IRDR is its major selling point, and the advantages stemming from the integration of the natural and social sciences were underlined. Major funders seem ready to invest money in disaster work but more for action than research. The importance of National Committees in the fundraising process was underlined. There was feeling that UN Member States should be prepared to invest in research on disaster risk reduction. The International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research (IGFA) was mentioned as a mechanism for addressing important potential sources of funds, as were the individual development agencies, philanthropic organizations and foundations.

In the last years the International Polar Year (IPY) has been especially successful in attracting research funding – much of it new money; this has been in large part due to its attention to outreach activities.

It was pointed out that governments were sensitized to, and keen on, research on climate change, and this should be exploited.

The co-sponsors of IRDR need to work on fundraising both collectively and individually. There are dangers from a funder's point of view of having too wide a process and a lack of focus.

It was agreed that the financing of IRDR would need to be given further attention at the Committee's second meeting later in the year.

[Establishment of the IRDR International Programme Office](#)

The process for establishing an International Programme Office for IRDR was reviewed by H. Moore. A call for offers to host the IPO and provide funding for its operational activities had been sent to all ICSU National Members in August 2008. Despite several strong expressions of interest, only three concrete bids were received by the deadline of 28 February 2009 – from the China Association for Science and Technology (CAST), the Academy of Sciences located in Taipei and the Indian National Academy of Sciences. At its 100th Meeting, the ICSU Executive Board examined the three bids, and took into consideration the preliminary analysis on scientific grounds prepared by the Chair, IRDR-SC. The financial level of the Indian bid was deemed by the Board to be significantly lower than that required for effective functioning. It therefore authorized the ICSU Executive Director to organize site visits to Beijing and Taipei only, and report back for a decision at its next Meeting. The site visits are to involve senior representatives of ICSU, ISSC and ISDR, as well as Chair, IRDR-SC.

The IPO would report to, and service the needs of, the IRDR Scientific Committee. It would be responsible for the running of the research programme, outreach activities and fundraising. As a minimum, the staff of the IPO would consist of an Executive Director (recruited internationally by the co-sponsors of IRDR) plus two professional staff members (one a science officer, the other with a more administrative profile). Once established, the IPO would arrange and, when appropriate, host the meetings of the IRDR-SC. Both remaining bids involve financial support to the Office of 300,000 euros per annum for ten years, the majority of that to be used for salaries and travel costs. Additional support is being promised by the would-be hosts, or alluded to.

During the discussion on the merits of the two locations, it was underlined that the freedom of the IPO of an interdisciplinary programme like IRDR to operate independently, examine situations and investigate causes/effects of disasters should be a non-negotiable condition.

[Programme of IRDR for first three years – Case studies exercise – Establishment of working groups](#)

During the debate on this item, reference was repeatedly made to the questions: What difference will IRDR make? Is its added value appropriate? and Where is the legacy of the international programme likely to be?

It was recognized that there is need to identify scientific targets soon, so that funding approaches can be made to the European Union, the National Science Foundation and so on. A flagship activity would be desirable, to open the mind and grab public attention - one major initiative to open the door to governments.

A two-year delay was considered too long. Within the UK, for example, developments are already taking place, with the research councils of NERC and ESRC working together in a way that fits very well with the interdisciplinary thinking and approach behind the IRDR. The programme needs to profit from such developments.

Case studies

It was agreed that IRDR would move ahead with the forensic investigations on past events (the good experiences and the bad) as described in the Report. They represent one of the immediately doable things within the research programme.

There is need for some reflection and planning to identify among the many possibilities the key case studies. Although some studies have already been carried out it is not clear whether these are sufficiently forensic in nature. There is also a timescale issue. Forensic investigations cannot simply examine a moment in time. Life paths, for example, need to be tracked, with a monitoring programme needed with 1, 2, 5, 10 year visits. There is need for a group to look at terminology.

It is important that case studies be chosen across the board and all possible geographical bias avoided. There is a real need to look at what is happening in developing countries, including comparative studies on the role of poverty. The aircraft analogy used in the Report is only applicable to the industrialized countries but other analogies may be possible. Major events and the "big issues" need to be addressed.

The value of adopting a thematic approach to post-event analysis was stressed. This links with template-type approach to the analyses. Such case study exercises could, and should, lead to the development of a protocol that would be useful in the future for other countries. A certain amount of 'thinking outside the box' is expected from an international programme like IRDR.

The importance of the forward-looking dimension to case studies was generally stressed since there is little point in carrying out vulnerability analysis if there is no predictive element.

It is important to establish rules and procedures whereby, for example, demonstration projects and programmes might be considered part of IRDR and be endorsed and labelled accordingly, thereby conferring international recognition. Distinction must be made between demonstration and forensic studies. The importance of having a programmatic statement and clear ideas about projects was underlined.

There was recognition of the effects of debilitating, repeated small events, and the social destabilization and negative effects on development that they may impose on developing countries. The value of monitoring vulnerability was underlined, and its value in the early detection of change. Monitoring vulnerability could form an important initiative, with a workshop to kick off the activity. This could well lead to longer project. Its quantitative nature should be emphasised.

Action: Working groups will be set up in the following areas, with the development of workshops events as required. The groups will include Committee members and some others.

- **Case studies and demonstration projects, scenarios and forensic investigations** (I. Burton, W. Hooke, K. Takeuchi, S. Sparks, D. Johnston, R. Chan, M. Lang)
- **Decision-making, planning resilience (Objective 2)** (R. Eiser, M. Patek, C. Vogel)

- **Vulnerability and risk – quantification and modelling (O. Cardona, M. Patek, O. Renn, S. Cutter, plus members of the Global Assessment Report team)**

Ian Burton (Canada, former member of ICSU Planning Group) and Susan Cutter (Director, Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute, Univ. South Carolina, USA) were proposed by Chair as experts who had expressed a willingness to be involved. All groups will be expected to report back to the Second Meeting in October 2009, whether or not actual events have been organized by then.

Research partnerships

The need for agreements on collaboration between IRDR and the many existing programmes of like-minded organizations and institutions was underlined.

Action: Each Committee member was encouraged to look at major national and international projects in his/her area, make informal links with potential partners, without commitment, and report back to the Committee with a view to a finite number of more formal arrangements being made.

The Chair will have discussions with WWRP/SERA and WCRP with respect to future collaboration.

Action: It was agreed that the Chair should develop agreements with WWRP and WCRP, subject to confirmation at the next IRDR SC meeting, on cooperation in research on weather and climate extremes and their role in disasters.

The Chair will also have discussions with the International Red Cross. There is need for contact and interaction with European Commission, the ISDR Scientific and Technical Committee (on which the Chair and H. Moore serve) and the Thematic Platforms of the UN Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as the private sector (insurance, oil, electricity, civil engineering).

Potential partners should be informed of the IRDR Science Plan and that, on this basis, there is some flexibility in developing partnerships. It is expected that the key ideas of integrated research could inspire ideas for research proposals, either jointly or by IRDR alone.

There is need for agreement on major points of research into decision-making, and to sell IRDR as a means of facilitating an integrated approach to risk reduction, with a focus on the decision-making process. IRDR will only work if it is carried out closely with the practitioners, with a good example being the programme in Auckland described by D. Johnston.

Outreach

Learning from the success achieved in outreach by IPY, it was agreed that a major effort needs to be made in the coming months to develop materials to publicize IRDR. It was agreed that the programme needs an attractive (four-page) flyer for publicity and outreach purposes. Such a document could also serve an important role in any moves to incite the creation of National Committees for IRDR.

The flyer should be prepared and describe succinctly the main thrusts and aims of IRDR. A better articulation of the added value of IRDR is needed, with the inclusion of key messages. The essential value of IRDR and the overall strategy need to be elaborated and clearly set out. Such an important text needs to be drafted and tested among Committee members. This document will be invaluable in the immediate future for building partnerships, seeking funding for workshop and case study activities, and promoting the aims and objectives of IRDR in UN Member States.

In addition, it was felt strongly that a professional quality PowerPoint presentation on IRDR should be developed as a core resource for use by Committee Members and others in promoting the programme among potential partners and funders.

Action: Draft texts for both flyer and PowerPoint presentation will be developed in the coming months and circulated to the Committee for comment (H. Moore)

[Capacity building in disaster risk reduction within IRDR – the START model](#)

The Chair described the role and work of START – global change SysTEM for Analysis, Research and Training – whose Scientific Steering Committee he currently co-chairs. START is part of the Earth System Science Partnership (ESSP) and sponsored by the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP), the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) and the International Human Dimensions Programme on global environmental change (IHDP). START fosters regional networks of collaborating scientists and institutions in developing countries to conduct research on regional aspects of environmental change, assess impacts and vulnerabilities to such changes, and provide information to policy-makers. Importantly, START also provides a wide variety of training and career development opportunities for young scientists. The International START Secretariat is located in Washington, DC (USA) at the offices of the American Geological Union. Five START Regional Centres located in Asia and Africa promote regional research cooperation and provide a framework to support syntheses and assessments relevant to policy-makers. START's activities within each region are overseen by regional committees composed of regional scientists and members of national and regional bodies. START is both well recognized and successful.

Action: It was agreed that the Chair should develop an agreement with START, subject to confirmation at the next IRDR SC meeting, on cooperation in capacity building and research in developing countries.

One complication is the fact that START itself does not cover the Americas (this region is left to the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research – IAI).

Action: It was agreed that A. Lavell would prepare an appraisal on Latin American capacity-building possibilities for IRDR.

[Data legacy of IRDR](#)

After a brief, impromptu presentation by A. Wirtz on the Munich-Re data gathering and processing system on disasters, the Committee discussed the collection of data, terminology, differences between procedures used for local and global databases, and the CRED-Munich Re-Swiss Re report on terminology.

Action: It was agreed to established a Working Group on long-term database and monitoring systems and tools, with an assessment of capacity of data sets to meet research needs (members: W. Hooke, A. Wirtz, S. Cutter, A. Lavell, L. Barrie, plus certain ISDR-STC and Global Assessment Report team members)

[Programmes of ICSU Regional Offices and their interaction with IRDR](#)

All three ICSU Regional Committees have identified natural hazards and disasters as a priority area . Attention was drawn to docs. IRDR-SC 1/13.1, IRDR-SC 1/13.2a-d, IRDR-SC 1/13.3, which represented the state of play with the three programmes being planned through the ICSU Regional Offices for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean respectively. The African programme had so far not gone beyond the publication of its Regional Report; the Asian Science Plan on Hazards and Disasters had been developed further, with the elaboration of implementation matrices for the two sub-programmes (on Earthquakes, Floods and Landslides, and Special Vulnerability of Islands); the Latin American and Caribbean Science Plan was a more recent initiative (it being noted that O. Cardona and A. Lavell were serving on the Scientific Planning Group).

Action: Recognizing the importance of articulating and/or integrating the ICSU regional programmes within the wider IRDR effort, it was agreed to establish a Task Group on the Integration of Regional Programmes (members: A. Lavell, K. Takeuchi,

O. Cardona and C. Vogel). A. Lavell will carry out a preliminary analysis of the three ICSU Regional programmes as a starting point for the group's work.

[Relationship with UN Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction](#)

R. Basher presented the International Strategy on Disaster Reduction (ISDR) as the successor to the IDNDR, whose primary functions are: policy and strategy, advocacy, information and networks, and partnerships for applications. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction represents a relatively new but key impetus in the pursuit of the aims and objectives of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. The Second Session of the Global Platform will shortly take place in Geneva in June 2009, in the wake of the launch of the first Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, on the theme 'Risk and poverty in a changing climate'.

The mechanism for scientific input and advice to the Platform is provided by the ISDR Scientific and Technical Committee (ISDR-STC), and this body represents an important point of articulation between ISDR and IRDR (IRDR is represented on the Committee by the Chair). At its Second Meeting ISDR-STC had concurred with the suggestion of the ISDR Secretariat that IRDR could become the ISDR System's research base and had welcomed ISDR's becoming a co-sponsor.

It was agreed that the relationship between IRDR and ISDR is of a special nature. A demand-led scenario was described by which national governments and agencies at the Global Platform could express needs, and through ISDR-STC could formulate demands for research which IRDR could respond to. Links were encouraged between IRDR and the Thematic Platforms of the Global Platform.

[Development and establishment of National Committees for IRDR](#)

There was support for the idea of encouraging the creation of National Committees for IRDR. In some countries such committees had proved valuable for earlier environmental programmes involving ICSU, although it was recognized that in certain other countries they had either failed to be set up, or had proved wholly inactive.

Action: Members of the Committee will be provided (by H. Moore) with a concise text containing persuasive arguments in favour of IRDR and a supporting network of National Committees.

[Elaboration of IRDR logo](#)

There would be need for a striking logo for the IRDR. It is not proposed that there be a formal competition for designs.

Action: Members of the Committee were encouraged to seek ideas or proposals from individuals within their own home organizations whom they know to have an interest in graphic design.

[Date and place of next meeting](#)

The date of the next meeting would most probably be in October 2009. The exact date and venue would to some extent depend upon the co-sponsors' decision as to where to locate the IPO, although the default would be Paris. It was recalled that the World Day for Disaster Reduction will be 6-7 October and could be an appropriate moment at which to reconvene.

The meeting rose at 12.00 p.m. on Wednesday 13 May.

ACTION LIST

General

Recognizing the co-sponsorship by ICSU, ISSC and UNISDR, and the role of the ISDR Scientific and Technical Committee in providing "strategic guidance on research needs for disaster risk reduction and oversight of progress", a mechanism needs to be put in place to ensure strong collaboration and exchange.

Working Groups and Task Teams

Working groups will be set up in the following areas, with the development of workshops events as required. The groups will include Committee members and some others.

1. **Case studies and demonstration projects, scenarios and forensic investigations** (I. Burton, W. Hooke, K. Takeuchi, S. Sparks, D. Johnston, R. Chan, M. Lang)
2. **Decision-making, planning resilience** (Objective 2) (R. Eiser, M. Patek, C. Vogel)
3. **Vulnerability and risk – quantification and modelling** (O. Cardona, M. Patek, A. Suhrke, O. Renn, S. Cutter, plus members of the Global Assessment Report team)
4. **Long-term database and monitoring systems and tools**, with an assessment of capacity of data sets to meet research needs (members: W. Hooke, A. Wirtz, S. Cutter, A. Lavell, L. Barrie, plus certain ISDR-STC and Global Assessment Report team members)
5. **Task Group on the Integration of Regional Programmes** (members: A. Lavell, K. Takeuchi, O. Cardona and C. Vogel), recognizing the importance of articulating and/or integrating the ICSU regional programmes within the wider IRDR effort. A. Lavell will carry out a preliminary analysis of the three ICSU Regional programmes as a starting point for the group's work.

Partner and joint activities

6. It was agreed that a joint **socio-economic research activity** with WMO should be developed under the guidance of a subset of the Committee (G. McBean, C. Vogel, W. Hooke). The terms of reference of such an activity will be developed in collaboration with the SERA Working Group.
7. It was agreed that the Chair should develop agreements with **WWRP and WCRP**, subject to confirmation at the next IRDR SC meeting, on cooperation in research on weather and climate extremes and their role in disasters.
8. It was agreed that the Chair should develop an agreement with **START**, subject to confirmation at the next IRDR SC meeting, on cooperation in capacity building and research in developing countries.
9. It was agreed that A. Lavell would prepare an appraisal on Latin American capacity-building possibilities for IRDR.

All members' actions

10. Each Committee member was encouraged to look at big supranational projects in his/her area, make informal links with potential partners, without commitment, and report back to the Committee with a view to a finite number of more formal arrangements being made.
11. Members of the Committee were encouraged to seek ideas or proposals from individuals within their own home organizations whom they know to have an interest in graphic design.

Secretariat actions

- 12. Draft texts for both flyer and PowerPoint presentation will be developed in the coming months and circulated to the Committee for comment (H. Moore)**
- 13. Members of the Committee will be provided (by H. Moore) with a concise text containing persuasive arguments in favour of IRDR and a supporting network of National Committees.**