

PRESS RELEASE

Earthquakes, volcanic eruption and oil-spill in the Gulf of Mexico – how can we improve the handling of catastrophes ?

3rd International Disaster and Risk Conference IDRC Davos 2010

Up to 1000 experts from more than 100 countries will discuss at the IDRC Davos 2010 on how to improve risk prevention as well as how to deal with mega catastrophes and climate change.

After the dramatic earthquakes of Haiti, Chile and China, the volcanic eruption in Iceland and the oil-spill in the Gulf of Mexico we were all confronted in a very short time with different types of catastrophes, which had disastrous impacts on human beings, the environment and the economic system.

In fact the disastrous events of the last few months gives us enough reasons to put into question our present way of dealing with catastrophes.

Could the response and relief time in Haiti have been reduced? Could the oil-spill in the Gulf of Mexico have been avoided and the environmental consequences reduced? How is Switzerland or Germany prepared against a huge earthquake? How do they relief forces interact? And the economic system – what will happen if we have a long-lasting aircraft grounding because of volcanic ash?

From 30 May to 3 June at IDRC Davos 2010, climate change and its manifold linkages with natural hazards, risks and disasters will be discussed against the background of global change, security and sustainable development beyond the United Nations Millenium Development Goals MDGs. Up to 1000 experts from more than 100 countries will be present.

Our top-speakers among many others are Maria Mutagamba, Minister for Water and Environment, Uganda, US Nato Admiral James G. Stavridis, who will speak in a plenary about „Humanitarian Logistics“, the climate research specialist Stefan Rahmstorf from the Potsdam-University, Luc Gnacadja, the UNCCD Executive Director, Janos Pasztor UN Secretary-General’s Climate Change Support Team Director, Yanhua Liu Councillor of the Chinese State Council, as well as other high-profile representatives of UN-Organisations academia and the private sector.



“From Thoughts to Action”

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Highlights

Desertification, Land degradation and Drought

Tuesday 1 June from 10.30 – 12.00 Uhr

Disasters are exacerbated by desertification, land degradation and drought which are among the most pressing global environmental challenges of our time. The sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems is the basis for the provision of critical services, such as food, energy and water. Sustainable land management contributes to Human Security, poverty alleviation, climate change mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity. How is soil quality interlinked with climate change, energy security and biodiversity? What are the necessary mechanisms to prevent desertification and land degradation worldwide? What are the implications of climate change induced desertification for policy making and governance processes? This panel will discuss the available frameworks to address the challenges posed by land degradation and highlight their weaknesses. Furthermore the panel will focus on providing ideas on how to tackle the problems in the future.

Plenary with:

Luc Gnacadja, Executive Director, UNCCD

Patrice Burger, Executive Director, CARI, France

Chris Reij, University of Amsterdam

Razavi Khadija-Catherine, Executive Director of Center for Sustainable Development (CENESTA), Iran

Roland A. Jansen, CEO Mother Earth Investment AG, Switzerland

Mega Catastrophes and Large Scale Natural Hazards

Tuesday, 1 June from 15.00 – 16.30 Uhr

The Indian Ocean Tsunami, Hurricane Kathrina or the Earthquakes of Wenchuan and Haiti are examples of large scale natural hazards that have revealed the existent gaps in disaster preparedness, disaster response and disaster recovery worldwide. These gaps draw significant challenges to the International Community. How can these gaps be filled in an effective manner? How can the UN become an effective instrument for large scale crisis management? What are examples of good practices and successful cooperation? The expert panel will elaborate on the gaps in large scale disaster management and draw upon good practices to start and translate those weaknesses and opportunities into a theoretical framework towards global risk governance.

Plenary with:

Jie Li, China Emergency and Rescue Management Institut Beijing

Dr. Ali Afdjei, Emergency Physician, Disaster Medicin

William Sabandar, Special Envoy Myanmar

Dag Nielsen, High Level Advisor UN GAID

Ecweru Musa Francis, Minister of State for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Uganda

Rouhban Badoui, Director Section for Disaster Reduction UNESCO, France

Sabandar William, Special Envoy of the Asean Secretary General for Post Nargis Recovery in Myanmar

Hays Walter, Former USGS expert for earthquake engineering



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ICT for Risk & Crisis Management

Wednesday, 2 June from 15.00 to 16.30

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have an enormous impact on the way public and private actors gather and share information, regulate access to relevant knowledge, and communicate with each other. Effectively applied within society, government, or aid organisations, ICTs serve as a poverty-reduction strategy, foster development and contribute significantly to Disaster Risk Reduction. On the other hand, the growing dependencies of public governance and private sector operations on ICTs have generated new types of risks that potentially undermine safety and stability in both areas.

Plenary with:

Sanjana Hattotuwa, Special Advisor to ICT4Peace Foundation, Sri Lanka
Dr. Abdl Labbi, Research Manager IBM Zurich
Haresh Shah, Obayashi Professor of Engineering, Emeritus Stanford University, USA
Ushahidi Africa, UNESCO
Villacis Carlos, Coordinator Global Risk Identification Programme GRIP/UNDP

Humanitarian Logistics

Thursday, 3 June from 13.00 to 14.30

The Earthquake in Haiti has sadly shown the outstanding importance of Humanitarian Logistics in disaster relief. It became obvious how little can be achieved if relief supplies, such as food, water, medical provision or temporary shelter that can not reach the site on time. Humanitarian logistics is a very important tool in disaster relief operations and in long term development. As the number of people vulnerable to disasters is increasing, the resources and infrastructures to address those needs are limited. The collaboration amongst stakeholders in Humanitarian Logistics has the potential to greatly impact outcomes. How can a global collaboration of stakeholders in Humanitarian Logistics be implemented? Is there a need for standardisation of terminology and technology? The panel will describe examples of worldwide Humanitarian Logistic operations before presenting the needs and potential solutions for more efficient and effective Humanitarian Logistics.

Plenary with:

Anisya Thomas-Fritz, Co-Founder Fritz Institute
Ian Heigh, Director EVERYWHERE Humanitarian Response and Logistics Services
James G. Stavridis, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, Commander United States European Command
Bernard Chomilier, Director World Food Programme. Rome
Maria Mutagamba, Minister for Water and Environment, Uganda
Willhaus Martin, Managing Director Kühne Stiftung, Switzerland



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Integrated Risk Governance
Thursday, 3 June from 15.00 to 16.30

Recently, the global risk community has realized that a new set of risk issues will become increasingly relevant in the future: issues of Integrated Risk Management and Governance. An instructive example is given by the 2008 combination of increasing food as well as oil prices with the economic slow-down triggered by the crisis in the American mortgage market and the risks of global climate change. The combination of these different kinds of risks makes it difficult to deal with any of them in isolation. Furthermore, current risk governance procedures make it equally difficult to address them in an integrated manner. How can risk governance be improved internationally? What are the key dynamic patterns of the entry and exit transitions? In what respect does a given risk exceed the capacity of given coping institutions or mechanisms? The panel will focus on the entry and exit switches that mark the beginning and end of emergency situations. It will investigate conditions that foster short and long-term learning processes in the face of emergencies as well as hindrances to such learning. Bringing together the various streams and communities of risk research and practice. Setting the foundation for a new global deal for integrated risk governance at all levels.

Plenary with:

Ortwin Renn, Chair of Environmental Sociology and Technology Assessment,
Germany

Walter Fust, former president Global Humanitarian Forum
Development and Climate Change,

Hareesh Shah, Obayashi Professor of Engineering, Emeritus Stanford University, USA

Stefan Pickl, Chair for Operations Research, COMTESSA Department of Computer
Science

Shi Peijun, Professor and Vice President Beijing Normal University, China

Find more information and details about the programme and the speakers:
www.davos2010.org

