



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF TRANSBORDER NATURAL DISASTERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE REGIONS CONCERNED

*Resolution adopted unanimously by the 108th Conference
(Santiago de Chile, 11 April 2003)*

The 108th Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

Noting that natural disasters due to such phenomena as earthquakes, volcanic activity, floods, hurricanes, forest fires that devastate virgin lands, and drought have hit countries throughout the world in recent years; and that the prevention of natural disasters and the management of their effects have become issues of great concern to these countries,

Conscious that natural disasters cause death and physical disruption which entails enormous social and economic cost and that the number of natural disasters (such as drought, floods and hurricanes) is increasing,

Emphasising the importance of identifying the meteorological and climatic causes of disasters, and the regions vulnerable to them, in order to lessen their impact,

Realising that the developing countries are the most seriously affected by these disasters because they are more vulnerable to natural risks,

Noting that natural risks connected with rivers, volcanoes and seismic fault lines often lie across national borders, necessitating their coordinated management by all the countries concerned,

Noting also that natural disasters which occur throughout the world have heightened national concerns for the safety of populations and the need for national and international measures to mitigate natural disasters,

Emphasising that environmental protection and mitigation of natural disasters may be closely linked and that natural disasters effect and may seriously damage the environment,

Recognising that each State bears primary responsibility for bringing relief to the victims of the natural disasters that occur on its own territory, and for adopting measures to allay their effects,

Aware of gender-specific differences in relation to vulnerability to natural risks, the impact of natural disasters and the needs to which they give rise,

Emphasising that vulnerability to natural disasters is often heightened by inequalities stemming from gender relations, economic circumstances, or ethnic or racial factors,

Emphasising also that natural disaster risk reduction is an integral part of sustainable development based on sound environmental management, and that

- Effective natural disaster prevention requires the participation of the vulnerable populations in planning, decision-making and operational activities;
- Any natural disaster prevention strategy involves various disciplines, sectors and institutions, thereby necessitating partnership arrangements,

Recognising the importance of legal instruments and international, regional and bilateral mechanisms that address natural disaster prevention and preparedness, and mitigate their effects,

Appreciating the work done by the agencies and partner organisations of the United Nations and by the various relevant regional organisations to mitigate the effects of natural disasters,

Noting the results of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1989-1999) and the institutional arrangements put into place after the closure of the Decade,

Calling to mind the strategy entitled *A Safer World in the 21st Century: Risk and Disaster Prevention*, and the *Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation*, and its Plan of Action,

Bearing in mind the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and its Plan of Action, and particularly the commitments to enhance the role of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and to allocate sufficient financial resources to the Special Fund for the Decade,

Recalling the relevant conclusions of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on "Women in the Year 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century",

1. *Expresses its solidarity* with countries and peoples struck by natural disasters;
2. *Calls on* governments to support efforts to build capacity in disaster preparedness, mitigation and management at regional, national and community levels, especially by increasing financial and technological assistance to developing countries, and to increase recognition and support for disaster management, in particular by incorporating disaster mitigation initiatives into national development strategies;
3. *Urges* all States to adopt and implement all necessary legislative and other appropriate measures to prevent, mitigate and manage the effects of transborder natural disasters, and to participate and engage constructively in regional and international disaster prevention and management forums;
4. *Encourages* the international community to cooperate more closely in mitigating the adverse effects of transborder natural disasters through improved preparedness, risk reduction and effective response, and to strengthen coordination mechanisms among States at the regional and international levels, including improved donor response coordination and harmonisation;
5. *Calls on* the international community to address funding, coordination, information exchange, and strategic planning in the context of transborder natural disasters, and to adopt common terminology, standards and practices to ensure greater interoperability in transborder disaster prevention and management;
6. *Urges* the UN agencies, multilateral and regional organisations, governmental and non-governmental actors to support research into the challenges of preventing and managing of transborder natural disasters;
7. *Calls on* governments to recognise the critical role of voluntary community-based and non-governmental organisations in disaster preparedness and response, and to facilitate their work, respecting their roles and principles, by enacting appropriate legislation;
8. *Encourages* States to consider signing or ratifying the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations, adopted at Tampere (Finland) on 18 June 1998, and also to commit to the Oslo Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief;
9. *Urges* all States to pursue international cooperation in order more fully to understand and thus lessen the impact of extreme weather events and other climatic variables, to share relevant knowledge and experience, and to continue improving transborder disaster reduction capacities through increased scientific analysis of disaster causation and early warning mechanisms;

10. *Invites* States to support the programmes implemented under the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and to increase funding earmarked for the Special Fund;
11. *Urges* States to incorporate a gender-equal perspective into strategies, policies and activities relating to the prevention of natural disasters;
12. *Calls on* parliaments to improve national legislation on the prevention of natural disasters and the mitigation of their impact, by adopting a multidisciplinary, gender-equal approach and by attaching special importance to the key role of local communities and partnership between all stakeholders;
13. *Also calls on* parliaments to ensure that national development programmes do not increase vulnerability to national risks, and that natural disaster preparedness is systematically incorporated into these programmes;
14. *Invites* parliaments to note that the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is preparing a report on the current state of international law relating to disaster response, to be presented to States and national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in December 2003, and *calls on* parliaments to make good use of this report;
15. *Urges* parliaments to recognise, according to established rules and criteria, the role of local bodies, the private sector, the scientific community, the media and other partners participating in activities linked to natural disaster prevention and management;
16. *Calls on* parliaments to make use of parliamentary diplomacy to promote international cooperation in the fields of natural disaster prevention, early warning, intervention, disaster mitigation, recovery and reconstruction.

Note: you can [download a complete electronic version](#) of the brochure "Results of the 108th Conference and related meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union" in PDF format (file size approximately 380K). This version requires [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#), which you can download free of charge.



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