

Message to Kobe

Water and Disaster Workshop

December 2004



Declaration

- In spite of well over one hundred years of massive human intervention: thousands of dams and the thousands of kilometres of dikes, reservoirs, bypasses, canals, emergency polders, irrigation and drainage of millions of thousands hectares of land, elaborate urban water management systems...

Declaration

- ... it seems that we have failed to provide effective protection from devastating power of water. The frequency and severity of water-related disasters are on the rise.

***We need
a new
vision***



Focus on vulnerability

- Vulnerability is an intrinsic and dynamic characteristic of communities at risk that has many components such as social, economic, environmental, and institutional. Only an integrated approach can succeed in the sustainable reduction of vulnerability.

Disaster reduction

- The role of political will and governance in creating a framework that makes sustainable water-related disaster reduction possible is just as important as preparing communities on a local level to be aware of and to manage their individual risks.

Monitoring/warning

- Research and practical/operational results in all related fields and sectors should be interconnected to provide for maximum efficiency. Assessment, monitoring, and early warning of both, the hazards (flood & drought) and the vulnerabilities, would contribute to mitigate risks and subsequent losses.

Interdisciplinary

- During the International Workshop on Water and Disasters experts from various fields exchanged views on many water-related interdisciplinary issues. A main emphasis was given to the focus from the purely scientific/engineering approach to the more holistic and socio-economically focused approach to water-related disaster and vulnerability reduction.

IFI/P

- One initiative strongly supported by the International Workshop on Water and Disasters is the International Flood Initiative/Programme (IFI/P). The IFI/P promotes an interdisciplinary approach to flood management to mobilize individual and community resources and assist governments in minimizing loss to life while aiming at sustainable development of flood-prone areas.

Questions

- Is this approach acceptable?
- Agreement with declaration?
- Vulnerability / reduction / warning / interdisciplinary / IFI/P?