



**EXPERT GROUP MEETING TO FINALIZE  
THE MODALITIES FOR SETTING UP OF  
THE SAARC DISASTER MANAGEMENT  
CENTRE (SDMC) AT NEW DELHI**

**New Delhi, 1 – 2 June, 2006**

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**SAARC/ENV/SCDM/3**

**REPORT**

**INTRODUCTION**

At the invitation of the Government of India, an Expert Group Meeting to finalize the Modalities for setting up SAARC Centre for Disaster Management was held (New Delhi, 1-2 June 2006). The list of participants is at **Annex-I**.

**INAUGURATION**

2. Mr P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti, leader of the delegation of India, the host country for the SAARC Centre for Disaster Management and its Director designate welcomed the chief guest and delegates.
3. Dr. G.S Rajagopal, Special Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India delivered the inaugural address. Full text of the Address is at **Annex-II**.
4. Mrs. Preeti Saran, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India gave the background and Objectives of the Centre. Her Statement is at **Annex III**.
3. Mr. Sonam Tshong, Director, SAARC Secretariat made a statement on behalf of the SAARC Secretary General. His statement is at **Annex IV**
4. Mr. Santosh Kumar, Professor (Policy Planning) National Institute of Disaster Management proposed a Vote of Thanks to the Chief Guest for gracing the Inaugural Session of the Meeting.

**I. OPENING OF THE MEETING**

5. As per SAARC practice, Mr. Sonam Tshong, Director SAARC Secretariat opened the Meeting.

## **II ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

6. The Meeting had before it the Provisional Agenda and Annotation circulated as Documents No. **SAARC/ENV/SCDM/1** and **SAARC/SCDM/2** respectively. The Agenda as adopted by the Meeting is at **Annex-V**.

## **III. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON**

7. Mr. P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti, the leader of the delegation of India, the host country for the SAARC Centre for Disaster Management and its Director designate was elected as the Chairperson of the Meeting by acclamation.

## **IV. COOPERATION OF THE CONCEPT PAPER BY INDIA ON THE SAARC CENTRE FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

Mr P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti made a presentation on the Concept Paper for the SAARC Disaster Management Centre.

The Concept Paper was discussed in detail. The revised Concept Paper duly approved by the Expert Group Meeting is at **Annex VI**.

The Meeting recommended to rename the Centre as the **SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC)** on the pattern of nomenclature of other existing SAARC Regional Centres.

## **V. ANY OTHER MATTER**

Dr Aslam Alam, Leader of the Bangladesh delegation and moderator of the Expert Group Meeting on Formulation of a Comprehensive Framework on Disaster Management (Dhaka, February 7-9, 2006) informed that the Seventh SAARC Environment Ministers Meeting (Dhaka, 24 May 2006):

- i. Urged the Member States to prepare their National Plan of Action for implementation of the Draft Framework on Disaster Management and Disaster Prevention and forward to the Secretariat by December 2006; and
- ii. Welcomed the offer of Bangladesh to host an Expert Group Meeting in 2007 to harmonize the national reports and articulate a Regional Plan of Action for submission to the next Meeting of the Environment Ministers.

The meeting noted the observations.

## **VI. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

The Meeting adopted its Report as contained in Document No. **SAARC/ENV/SCDM/3.**

## **VII. VOTE OF THANKS**

On behalf of visiting delegation, the member of the delegation of Bangladesh, Mr Nazrul Islam proposed a Vote of Thanks. In his remarks, he expressed appreciation to the Government of India for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to delegations, and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting. He appreciated the efficient manner in which the Chairperson guided the deliberations of the Meeting to a successful conclusion. He also thanked the SAARC Secretary General and the Director for facilitating the deliberations of the Meeting and the excellent documentation prepared for it.

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## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

### **Bangladesh**

1. **Dr. Aslam Alam,**  
Joint Secretary,  
Ministry of Food and Disaster Management
2. **Mr. Nazrul Islam,**  
Director (SAARC-II)  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### **Bhutan**

1. **Mr. Tenzin Rondel**  
First Secretary  
Royal Bhutanese Embassy  
New Delhi

### **Maldives**

1. **Mr. Ali Shareef,**  
Deputy Director,  
Department of Meteorology

### **Pakistan**

1. **Mr. Muhammad Irfan Tariq,**  
Architect,  
Ministry of Environment

### **Nepal**

1. **Mr. Lekh Nath Pokhrel,**  
Under Secretary  
Ministry of Home Affairs

### **Sri Lanka**

1. **Mr. W.B.J. Fernando,**  
Consultant  
Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights

### **SAARC Secretariat**

1. **Mr. Sonam Tshong,**  
Director  
SAARC Secretariat

## **INDIA**

1. **Shri P.G.Dhar, Charkrabarti,**  
Executive Director  
National Institute of Disaster Management  
Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt of India
2. **Ms Preeti Saran,**  
Joint Secretary (SAARC)  
Ministry of External Affairs, Govt of India
3. **Shri Naveen Verma,**  
Joint Secretary (DM)  
Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt of India
4. **Shri Oscar Kerketta,**  
Director (SAARC)  
Ministry of External Affairs, Govt of India
5. **Dr Santosh Kumar,**  
Professor (Policy & Planning)  
National Institute of Disaster Management  
Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt of India

## Annexure II

### **Speech of Shri G.S. Rajagopal Special Secretary Ministry of Home Affairs at the Inaugural Function of the Expert Group Meeting to Finalize the Modalities for setting up the SAARC Centre for Disaster Management at NIDM, New Delhi.**

Mr. Sonam Tshong, Director, SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu, Ms. Preeti Saran, Joint Secretary (SAARC), Ministry of External Affairs, Mr. P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti, Executive Director, National Institute of Disaster Management and distinguished delegates from SAARC Member Countries,

I have immense pleasure to be here with you at this inaugural session of the SAARC Expert Group Meeting to discuss the modalities for the setting up of the SAARC Centre for Disaster Management at New Delhi.

India had proposed to set up this Centre a few months after the Indian Ocean Tsunami had hit four out of seven Member Countries of the SAARC. We are happy that our proposal was approved by the Heads of State and Govt. of SAARC countries in the Summit meeting held at Dhaka during November, 2005. We have decided that this Centre shall be located at the National Institute of Disaster Management at New Delhi which is fast developing as a centre for excellence on disaster management in this part of the world.

We are all aware that natural disasters do not always follow the political boundaries of nations. The earthquake of Bhuj had sent tremors as far deep as Karachi just as the recent quake in Muzaffarabad devastated the hilly settlements of Uri and Karnah in Kashmir. The cyclones of Bay of Bengal affect the coastal regions of India and Bangladesh just as the cyclones on Arabian Sea hit the coastal regions of Gujrat in India and Sindh in Pakistan. Much of the floods of Bihar and West Bengal as well that of Bangladesh and Bhutan have their origin in Nepal. Indian Ocean Tsunami of last winter caused devastation in four out of seven South Asian countries. This has brought into focus, as never before, that nothing short of a strong regional co-operation can reduce the risks of disaster in any meaningful manner in this part of the globe.

The setting up of the SAARC Centre on Disaster Management in New Delhi will be the first milestone for cementing regional cooperation for disaster risk mitigation and management in South Asia.

The Vision of the SAARC Centre would be to emerge as a centre for knowledge and training on disasters in any part of South Asia and to be recognized as a global centre for excellence in the field of disaster risk mitigation and management.

The Mission of the Centre would be to serve all the stakeholders in the Member countries in disaster management by providing policy advice and facilitating capacity building services including strategic learning, research, training, system development and expertise promotion for effective disaster preparedness and mitigation.

Disaster risk mitigation and management, as you are all aware, is a highly inter-disciplinary and multi-sectoral issue. Knowledge and practices on disaster management are taking place continuously at all levels, horizontally across regions - local, national and global, and vertically across many sectors disciplines, ranging from physical and atmospheric to behavioral, social and management sciences. Therefore the most effective way of integrating the ever expanding knowledge on disaster management is networking among countries, institutions, organizations and individuals. Recent advances in information and communication technologies have made such integration and interaction a virtual reality.

The National Institute of Disaster Management is already developing a powerful networking model with national and international institutions working in the field of disaster management. The SAARC Centre for Disaster Management shall similarly facilitate a networking of national focal point in each Member countries with the organizations and institutions within the country and further networking with all the networking institutions. Such networking of networks shall enable quick transmission of information, data, knowledge, resources and expertise for dealing with disaster situations.

This way we will be able to develop very strong information base on the potential disasters in this region and share our knowledge, expertise and good practices for the mutual benefit of nearly 1.3 billion people living in the region.

I am sure the modalities of the organizational structure and processes of the SAARC Centre for Disaster Management shall be finalized today during this deliberation and the Centre shall start functioning within a few weeks thereafter.

For the present the Centre shall function at the existing premises of the National Institute of Disaster Management. We are in the process of developing a large campus of the Institute where the Centre shall be shifted with state-of-the-art facilities for training, research, documentation, networking and interaction among all the stakeholders on disaster risk reduction in all the Member countries.

I wish this meeting of the Expert group all success.

I sincerely hope that we would be able to meet very soon again at the inaugural function of the Centre.

Thank you all.

**Address of Ms Preeti Saran, Joint Secretary (SAARC), Ministry of External Affairs**

South Asia is a victim of natural disasters. In the aftermath of the Tsunami of December 2004, the regional cooperation for disaster relief, in which India also actively participated, helped in dealing with the situation more effectively. The earthquake in 2005, which devastated the subcontinent, resulting in tragic loss of life and property, reiterates the need for forging even closer bonds for dealing with such calamities. India's offer for hosting the SAARC center for Disaster Management and Preparedness has been welcomed by the leaders at the 13<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit in DHAKA. This is an important development, considering the extensive loss of life and property due to natural disasters, which have affected our region in recent years. We need a permanent regional response mechanism dedicated to disaster preparedness, emergency relief and rehabilitation. India's record and demonstrated capabilities in this regard are well known. This centre will be located at the National Institute of Disaster Management in Delhi.

India considers SAARC as an important forum for regional cooperation. We remain committed to SAARC to realize its objectives and goals, which will be in the interest and welfare of the people of the region.

India has developed a Concept Paper on the setting up of the SAARC Centre for Disaster Management at New Delhi, which was circulated to the member countries through the SAARC secretariat in February 2006.

## Annexure IV

### **STATEMENT BY MR. SONAM TSHONG, DIRECTOR, SAARC SECRETARIAT**

H.E. Dr. Raja Gopal, Special Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India  
Distinguished Delegates  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I feel greatly honoured and humbled to be invited to say a few words on this important occasion and to convey the greetings of the SAARC Secretary General.

It is a testimony of the importance that the Government of India places on the SAARC process and SAARC cooperation in disaster management that the honourable Home Special Secretary has consented to be the Chief Guest for inaugural ceremony. I have no doubt that Your Excellency's presence and speech will inspire the distinguished delegates to a fruitful deliberation.

I would also like to place on record, my appreciation to the Government of India and in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Institute of Disaster Management for the warm reception and excellent arrangements made for the meeting. I know that Mr. P.G. Dhar, Executive Director of NIDM and Director of the SAARC Centre for Disaster Management and his able team have been working tirelessly over the last few days to ensure that everything goes well.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the distinguished delegates who have come to attend the important Expert Group Meeting in the beautiful and historic city of Delhi.

Being among experts, I will not dwell on the importance of meeting in contributing to regional cooperation in disaster preparedness and management.

While scientists may debate about the causes of natural disasters, its terrible consequence is something that ordinary people in South Asia and indeed the world have to overcome on a daily basis.

In this regard, the establishment of the SAARC Disaster Management Centre here in New Delhi will be an important part of the regional effort to put in place an effective regional mechanism to mitigate the impact of large scale natural disasters. This centre along with the Centre for Meteorology at Dhaka, the Coastal Zone Management Centre at Malé and the proposed Forestry Centre at Thimphu will provide a synergistic impact on the regional efforts for risk reduction and management.

I would like to conclude by once again expressing our appreciation for the presence of the honourable Home Special Secretary and for the warm hospitality provided by the government of India.

Thank You.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

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**EXPERT GROUP MEETING FOR  
CONSIDERATION OF CONCEPT PAPER FOR  
THE SAARC CENTRE FOR DISASTER  
MANAGEMENT**

New Delhi, 1 – 2 June

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SAARC/ENV/SCDM/2

**ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

**I. OPENING OF THE MEETING**

As per SAARC practice, the meeting may be opened by the SAARC Secretary General or his representative.

**II ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The Draft Provisional Agenda and its annotations circulated as document No. SAARC/ENV/SCDM/1 and SAARC/ENV/SCDM/2 may be respectively adopted by consensus.

**III. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON**

The leader of the delegation of the host country for the SAARC Centre for Disaster Management may be elected as the Chair of the Expert Group Meeting.

**IV. CONSIDERATION OF THE CONCEPT PAPER BY INDIA ON THE SAARC CENTRE FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

The Thirty-first Session of the Standing Committee (Dhaka, 9-10 November 2005) welcomed and accepted the offer of India to establish a SAARC Centre for Disaster Management and Preparedness.

India prepared a Concept paper for the proposed Centre which was circulated at the SAARC Expert Group Meeting on Formulation of a Comprehensive Framework on Disaster Management (Dhaka, 7-9 February 2006). It was decided that the Indian Concept Paper will be discussed in detail in a separate meeting to be hosted by the Government of India. The delegation of India informed that the Meeting would be held in March 2006.

The Concept Paper from India is circulated as document No. SAARC/ENV/SCDM/3 for consideration by the Meeting.

**Director of SAARC Centre for Disaster Management may be invited to make a brief presentation on the Concept paper.**

*Delegates may wish to consider the Concept Paper and make its recommendations.*

**V. ANY OTHER MATTER**

**VI. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

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## **A Revised Concept Note on SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC) New Delhi**

In the aftermath of Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 2004, a Special Session of the SAARC Environment Ministers was held at Male on 25 June 2005. The Ministers concluded the meeting by adopting the Male Declaration, which reiterated the need to formulate a “Comprehensive Framework on Early Warning, Disaster Management and Disaster Prevention”.

1.2 As a follow up to earlier decisions of the Environment Ministers’ meetings, India developed a Concept Paper on SAARC - Information Sharing on Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation which was circulated to the Member States for consideration. In this Concept Paper India offered to host the SAARC Cell for Disaster Management at the National Institute of Disaster Management, Delhi.

1.3 Standing Committee of the SAARC in its Thirty-First Session held in Dhaka on 9-10 November 2005 “welcomed and accepted the offer of India to host a SAARC Centre for Disaster Management and Preparedness which would have access to its technological equipments and expertise as well as linkage with its national disaster management centres, and which could also cooperate with the existing regional centers”. (Para 69(iii) of the Report of the Standing Committee: Thirty-First Session).

1.4 This decision of the Standing Committee was considered and approved by the Council of Ministers in its Twenty-Sixth Session held on 11 November 2005 and by the Heads of States and Government in its Thirteenth meeting held at Dhaka on 12-13 November 2005.

1.5 India proposes that the SAARC Disaster Management Centre shall be made functional soon after the endorsement of this Concept Paper by the appropriate SAARC body from the existing premises and with the support of the existing faculty of the NIDM. A brief outline of the Centre was submitted for the consideration of the ‘Expert Group on Formulation of a Comprehensive Framework on Disaster Management’ held at Dhaka on 7-9 February 2006.

### **Vision**

2.1 The SAARC Disaster Management Centre would be a vibrant centre of excellence for knowledge, research and capacity development on disaster management.

## **Mission**

3.1 The SAARC Disaster Management Centre would serve the Member Countries by providing policy advice and facilitating capacity development services including strategic learning, research, training, system development, expertise promotion and exchange of information for effective disaster risk reduction and management.

## **Functions**

4.1 The functions of the SAARC Disaster Management Centre would be:

- (a) to collect, compile, document and disseminate data, information, case studies, indigenous knowledge and good practices relating to disaster management particularly from the Member Countries
- (b) to analyze information, undertake research and disseminate research findings on disaster management among the Member Countries;
- (c) to develop educational materials and conduct academic and professional courses on disaster management;
- (d) to organize training and awareness programmes for various stakeholders on disaster management for the Member Countries;
- (e) to develop training modules on various aspects on disaster management and conduct programmes of Training for Trainers including simulation exercises;
- (f) to provide assistance in the formulation of policies, strategies, disaster management framework and any other assistance as may be required by the Member Countries or organizations and institutions nominated by the Member Countries;
- (g) to undertake, organize, facilitate and participate in workshops, conferences, seminars, lectures etc on various aspects of disaster management in the Member Countries;
- (h) to undertake publication of journals, research papers and books and establish and maintain online resource centers in furtherance of the aforesaid objects;

4.2 The SAARC Disaster Management Centre shall collaborate with other SAARC Centres, particularly SAARC Meteorological Research Centre, SAARC Coastal Zone Management Centre and SAARC Forestry Centre to avoid duplications and achieve synergies in programmes and activities

## **Strategies**

5.1 The SAARC Disaster Management Centre shall develop appropriate strategies for the performance of its functions, which may include the following:

- a) Network with the national focal points of disaster management and with the concerned regional and international bodies;
- b) Assist the national focal points of disaster management of Member Countries to develop appropriate models for networking with their research, training and other institutions ;
- c) Develop a network of networking institutions to facilitate quick acquisition, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information, data and knowledge on disaster management including linkages with approved real-time data providers ;
- d) Use information and communication technologies to develop a virtual resource centre for disaster management in South Asia.

**Location:**

6.1 The SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC) shall be located at the premises of National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) at New Delhi.

**Organization**

7.1 A Governing Board shall be established in accordance with the “Rules of Procedure for the Governing Board of SAARC Regional Centres” to approve and monitor programmes, annual budgets and create posts of the SAARC Disaster Management Centre.

7.2 The Governing Board shall consist of Members nominated by the Member Countries, the Director of the Centre, a representative of national focal point for SAARC of the host Country and a representative of the SAARC Secretary General.

7.3 The Centre shall have a Director who is nominated by the host Government and appointed by the SAARC Secretary General.

7.4 The Centre may broadly consist of the following divisions which will have disaster management experts and specialists with appropriate qualifications and experiences:

- A. Water and Climate Related Disasters
- B. Geologically Related Disasters:
- C. Biological and other Human Induced Disasters:
- D. Policy, Planning & Related Issues

7.5 The Centre shall also have appropriate technical and other personnel to look after networking, documentation, finance, administration and other supportive functions.

7.6 The mode of recruitment, appointment and other personnel matters for the professional and General Service Staff (GSS) of the Centre shall be in accordance with the “Service Rules of the SAARC Regional Centres”.

7.7 Financial rules of the Centre shall be in accordance with the “Financial Rules and Procedures of the SAARC Regional Centres” and the “Harmonized Provisions Relating to the Financial and Administrative Matters of the SAARC Regional Centres”.

### **Funding Modalities.**

8.1 Funds for the Centre which has three heads, namely, institutional costs, Programme Costs and Capital Costs shall be in accordance with the cost sharing formula and guidelines for SAARC Regional Centres

### **Headquarters Agreement**

9.1 The relations between the Centre and the host Government shall be in accordance with the “Common Format for Agreement on Functioning and Operation of Regional Centres and the Conduct of Relations Between the Regional Centres and host Government”.

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