

NATURAL DISASTERS: IS CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSIBLE?
A ROUND TABLE ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD WATER DAY
22 MARCH 2004, 9.00-13.00

The impact of water-related hazards – such as floods, hurricanes, landslides and droughts – across the globe is staggering, with average economic losses from extreme weather events increasing six-fold since the 1960s. Developing countries suffer most of all, often experiencing losses that exceed years of hard-won and desperately needed development.

Floods in Asia and the extreme summer heat wave across Europe brought extensive losses in 2003, contributing to the year's overall cost of weather-related catastrophes of over \$60 billion. Many are predicting the trend will continue its steady rise.

Why the increase? Could it be due to what many people nowadays deem as fact: a changing climate?

Evidence shows that climate change and disasters are closely linked, with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) consistently projecting the likelihood of increased frequency and intensity of hazards in the future. The management and reduction of climate-related risk and vulnerability is becoming an increasing priority, and our adaptation to our changing climate has the potential to drastically reduce the impacts of water-related hazards.

9:00 Coffee/tea

9:30 Welcome remarks by Frits Schlingemann, Director, UNEP/Regional Office for Europe

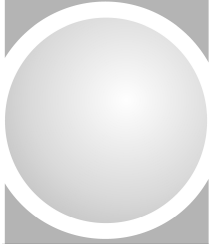
9:45 Introduction by Sálvano Briceño, Director, Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR)

Panelist presentations

- ***It's the way you tell them...***
Tim Radford, Science Editor, The Guardian
- ***Preparedness for climate change: Implications for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies***
Madaleen Helmer, Head, International Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre
- ***Understanding and predicting the Earth's physical climate***
David Carson, Director, World Climate Research Program, WMO
- ***Environmental risk, economics and development***
Paul Clements-Hunt, Economic and Trade Branch, UNEP
- ***Q: Are natural disasters caused by climate change? A: Does it really matter?***
Richard J.T. Klein, Senior Researcher, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

12:00 Discussion with panelists and participants

13:00 Close



Panelists

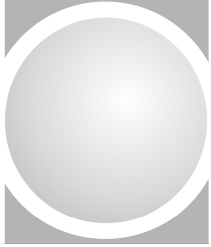
Tim Radford has worked at The Guardian since 1973, where he currently works as Science Editor. He has wide broadcast experience in print, radio and television, and co-wrote *The Crisis of Life on Earth* in 1990. In 1992 he won the Science Writer of the Year Award

Madaleen Helmer studied journalism not to become a journalist, but rather to learn skills that she later put into practice during 15 years as coordinator of the European Centre on Pacific Issues. Her increasing interest in the impacts of climate change on the vulnerable led her to the Netherlands Red Cross where she established the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre in 2001.

David Carson, Director, World Climate Research Program, WMO.

Paul Clements-Hunt is the Coordinator for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Finance Initiatives (FI), based in Geneva. The UNEP FI – comprising the Financial Institutions Initiative and the Insurance Industry Initiative – are voluntary initiatives in which more than 260 banks, insurers, re-insurers and asset management concerns worldwide play a role. The goal of UNEP FI is to extend environmental and sustainable development best practice performance throughout the finance sector. Clements-Hunt joined UNEP in December 2000. Prior to that, he spent the period 1998-2000 representing the Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the World Business Organisation, on matters related to their policy work in the fields of energy, environment and sustainable development. From 1991-1998, Clements-Hunt was based in Bangkok, Thailand, engaged in environmental business issues in the Southeast Asia region.

Richard J.T. Klein is a senior researcher at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) in Germany and an associate of the Oxford office of the Stockholm Environment Institute. In the past eleven years he has conducted research projects and provided consultancy services for a range of organizations, including UNDP, UNEP, UNFCCC, GEF, World Bank, OECD, WHO, EU and the Dutch and German governments. In addition, he has been a lead author in the IPCC Second and Third Assessment Reports and a coordinating lead author in its Special Report on Technology Transfer. To date he has produced around forty journal articles, book chapters and reports, edited a book and a special journal issue and contributed to numerous national and international workshops and conferences.



REGISTRATION FORM

**Roundtable on Climate Change and Natural Disasters
22 March 2004, 9.00 - 13.00
International Environment House, Room 3**

You are cordially invited to participate in this roundtable and celebration of World Water Day 2004. Owing to the limited number of seats available, please indicate your participation in advance by completing this form and returning it by 19 March 2004 to Ms. Fatma Gordon at the address below by fax, post or email (Fatma.gordon@unep.ch).

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____