

Preface

There has been some degree of reluctance in the past to consider disaster risk management within the mainstream of adaptation to climate variability and climate change; however, there is now wide recognition of the need to incorporate disaster risk management concerns in dealing with such phenomena. There is also a growing awareness of the necessity for a multisectoral approach in managing the effects of climate variability and climate change, since this can lead to a significant reduction of risk.

With storms, hurricanes, forest fires, floods, or droughts, matters related to “risk management”, “vulnerability”, or “risk analysis”—among others—always need to be duly considered. Knowledge about these inter-relations is needed in order to better integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations into planning processes, as well as into implementation on the ground. This is exemplified in the UNFCCC Compendium on impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation methods, where a number of measures are outlined.

The fourth online climate conference, CLIMATE 2011, which draws from the success of the previous online events (CLIMATE 2008, CLIMATE 2009, and CLIMATE 2010), has filled a research gap and discussed many emerging issues related to climate variation, climate change, and disaster risk management. The event also introduced a variety of projects, initiatives, and strategies currently being undertaken and implemented in the five continents, which showcased concrete examples of how to ensure that matters related to climate variability and climate change are duly considered in disaster risk management.

I am therefore very pleased to introduce the book “Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management”, which is one of the outcomes of CLIMATE 2011. This publication is important for three main reasons:

1. It presents the latest findings from scientific research on climate variation, climate change, and their links with disaster risk management;
2. It showcases projects and other initiatives in this field that are being undertaken in both industrialized and developing countries, by universities and scientific institutions, government bodies, national and international agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders;

3. It discusses current and future challenges, identifying opportunities and highlighting the still unrealized potential for promoting better understanding of the connections between climate variation, climate change, and disaster risk management worldwide.

My thanks are due to all authors for their willingness to share their knowledge and for the time they have spent in writing and documenting their projects and their experiences. Thanks are also due to the CLIMATE 2011 team—Jelena Babir, Natalie Fischer, Olaf Gramkow, Franziska Mannke, Kathrin Rath, Josep de la Trincheria, and Johanne Vogt—for all their hard work. Finally, sincere thanks go to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) for the support they provided, which has enabled the dissemination of this book to a worldwide audience, especially to people and organizations in developing countries.

I hope this book will provide valuable knowledge and information for international and regional disaster risk management specialists and climate change and planning experts, as well as for all those interested in the connections between climate change and disaster risk management. Enjoy your reading!

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