

BRIEF REPORT FROM MY PARTICIPATION AT THE UNDRR GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION, GENEVA, JUNE 2025

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Dear all,

On behalf of the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH), I attended the UN conference on disaster prevention in Geneva from Tuesday to Friday. The event was highly productive, offering the opportunity to connect with numerous professionals globally. Several new contacts were established, which I will follow up on. Additionally, I engaged with many representatives from UNDRR and the International Science Council (ISC) and was delighted to meet with Professor Virginia Murray again.

The conference, organized by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), is known as the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

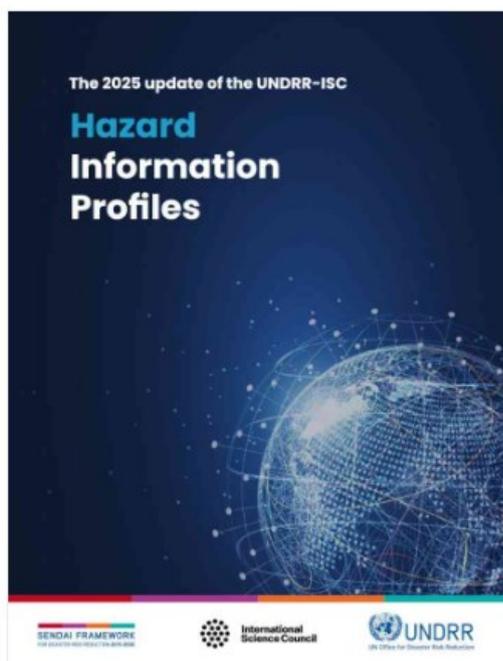
Link: [GP2025 Homepage | Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction](#)

More than 4,000 delegates, representing governments, international organizations, the private sector, academia, and NGOs, participated. Virtually all UN offices were represented. Attendance was by invitation following an application process.

I contributed to organizing a thematic session that was part of the formal program: [TS2-2: Leveraging values of nature for a resilient future](#). I also helped draft the background document for this session on nature-based solutions (NBS): [download](#).

Launch of 2025 update of the UNDRR-ISC Hazard Information Profiles

During the conference, the updated Hazard Information Profiles (HIPs) were launched. Professor Virginia Murray, Chair of the HIPs Steering Committee, invited me to participate in a special session in this regard. As many of you are aware, on behalf of the IFEH, I have been involved in updating this comprehensive compendium on HIPs, which aims to list significant hazards.



The report comprises two documents:

1. Hazard Information Profiles – technical report (General description and with information about authors, etc.):
Link: [download](#)
2. Hazard Information Profiles – Supplement (The document containing the many HIPs):
Link: <https://council.science/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/HIPs-2025-Supplement.pdf>

The Hazard Identification Profiles (HIPs) do not provide an overview of various disasters but rather focus on hazards. For instance, severe weather, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, droughts, or the presence of chemicals are considered hazards. These hazards are not disasters per se; however, under unfavourable circumstances and in the absence of adequate preparation or preventive measures, they can escalate into disasters with significant repercussions for public health or environmental conditions.

Each hazard is concisely described within 2-4 pages, referencing established knowledge in the respective field. This compilation of hazards facilitates the creation of a "common language" across different regions and serves as a quick reference for individuals developing Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) plans, emergency response strategies, prevention plans, and in managing acute situations. Additionally, this work aids in establishing clear definitions that can be utilized by the United Nations and other organizations when compiling statistics and formulating new policies.

This work is conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) [<https://www.undrr.org/>] and the International Science Council (ISC) [<https://council.science/>].

During the update conducted prior to the conference for more than a year, I was part of the team responsible for revising the "chemical" hazards section. This effort involved several hundred researchers and professionals from around the world who contributed to updating the entire work.

At the beginning of the task, I proposed the inclusion of a new Hazard Identification Profile (HIP) on PFAS under the "Chemicals" category, which was ultimately accepted. I actively participated in drafting this PFAS HIP. It is worth noting that although several hundred proposals for new HIPs were submitted, only a select few were incorporated into the final work.

Promotion of the new IFEH Policy Statement on Disaster Risk Reduction and Environmental Health

During the conference, I had the opportunity to promote our new [IFEH Policy Statement on Disaster Risk Reduction and Environmental Health](#). We are currently working to ensure that the IFEH Policy Statement will be accessible on the UNDRR Preventionweb network.

Closing remarks at the GP 2025 - by Kamal Kishore, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction

Kamal Kishore delivered the closing remarks at the GP 2025, providing informative insights and clear messages. The entire speech can be accessed, along with a video of his presentation, on the GP 2025 website via these links:

<https://globalplatform.undrr.org/conference-event/gp2025-closing-ceremony>

<https://globalplatform.undrr.org/news/kamal-kishore-we-can-celebrate-success-real-work-starts-now>

Some citations from his speech:

"First: we are succeeding

Disaster mortality is down 50% decade on decade.

Over 130 countries have DRR strategies.

That's a scale of progress we haven't seen in any other area of development practice. We are succeeding – and that's rare.

But success is fragile: Yes, fewer lives are lost – but the newer risks are shifting. Mortality risk from intensifying hazards like heatwaves, and low-frequency high-impact geophysical hazards such as earthquakes and tsunamis continues to be a cause for concern.

We still have work to do on Target A – to reduce disaster mortality – and Target E – to put in place national and local DRR strategies.

Strategies exist; but are they backed by funding? By legislation? Are their effects felt at local level? We must ask these tough questions – to ourselves, our communities, and our governments – so that we can find and fill the gaps.

Success is not guaranteed to last. We need to consolidate our progress and remain alert. We have to do more. ”

And further citations from his speech:

“The innovative work is happening at local levels. We need to capture and elevate these initiatives – not just to circulate in reports, but to give legitimacy, voice, and funding so these actions can be scaled.

The future of disaster risk reduction is not just national. It’s in cities, towns, and villages.

If we don’t reduce risk at the local level, we won’t succeed. Local actors are already taking action – they are not waiting for the UN or national governments. We must scale this work.”

My final comments

Kamal Kishore emphasized the importance of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) initiatives carried out at the local level and suggested that these should be scaled up and supported. It is noteworthy that since 2016, during a meeting with the UNDRR, the IFEH has strongly advocated for the significance of local-level efforts, including Environmental Health (EH). This advocacy, I believe, contributed to the discussions on the theme for the GP 2017 in Cancun, Mexico, and positively influenced some of the DRR-related indicators in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by highlighting the importance of having "local" DRR strategies.

Regarding the launch of the new updated HIPs and the IFEH's involvement in this initiative, I have found this engagement to be highly important. Such collaborations are crucial for the continued advancement of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to Professor Virginia Murray. She has always been very helpful and supportive for the inclusion of Environmental Health as an essential component within the broad framework of scientific disciplines necessary for the success of DRR initiatives.

In conclusion, I firmly believe that the IFEH's participation at the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction 2025 in Geneva has been highly beneficial. This engagement has strengthened our cooperation with the UNDRR and the ISC, contributing to the growth of our organization and furthering the mission of the IFEH.

Finally, I have included a few photos on the following pages to give an impression of the atmosphere at the conference – and its surroundings.

Kindly,

Henning I. Hansen





Professor Virginia Murray, UK Health Security, International Science Council, Chair of the HIPs steering Committee and Henning I. Hansen, Chair IFEH DRR Committee, Hon Vice President IFEH





And finally... this very telling poster, which was displayed in the large entrance hall.