

OVERARCHING ISSUES AND NEXT STEPS

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Synopsis. Throughout the Forum, it was emphasized that natural hazards cause a significant impact on the United States. Natural hazards have to be prepared for so the Nation can avoid them as much as possible. Hurricanes, tornadoes, drought, earthquakes, and flooding are just a few of the hazards the Nation faces. Although not extensively discussed, manmade hazards can be equally as devastating, and therefore, the country needs to plan for these, as well. Basic processes, methodologies or approaches were developed to evaluate what was needed for both risk assessment and risk management and were used by the breakout sessions' and panel sessions' discussions to cover the Forum's overarching objectives. The success of these approaches was possible because of the various sectors that were brought together: the Federal Government, academia, and the private sector. These Forum objectives were to:

- Examine risk assessment processes and approaches that evolved from legislation or agency guidance;
- Review risk assessment research and its applications to manage/reduce natural hazards;
- Identify/characterize areas of vulnerability and exposure, probability of occurrence, consequences, and mitigation opportunities;
- Highlight efforts in developing national standards and capabilities for data monitoring, data collection, and model development;
- Examine methods to quantify and publicize the social and economic impacts of natural hazards; and
- Develop a consensus leading to coordinated risk assessment and management of natural hazards through:
 - ▶ Legislative proposals
 - ▶ Policy guidance
 - ▶ Agency cooperation.

As new legislation is formulated and policy guidance is generated by any particular agency that will have an impact on another, interagency coordination and cooperation must be promoted and maintained. OFCM and SNDR are both well situated and willing to accomplish this on the Federal level. In addition, development of good partnerships between the users and the developers, as well as with the all important local users, is key to the overall success of any risk management program. Many of the Forum breakout sessions emphasized the great work that takes place at the local level and how important it is to take their concerns into consideration. At the conclusion of the Forum, it was clear that there was an affirmation of the Forum's generic risk assessment and management approach and an overall consensus to focus efforts on the following identified overarching issues and needed next steps:

- Consensus to proceed with National Natural Hazard Assessment
 - ▶ Attack in “bite-size chunks
 - ▶ Develop an action plan to proceed
 - ▶ Define roles/responsibilities of public and private entities

- Integrate efforts with the Congressional Natural Hazards Caucus
 - ▶ Coordinate on steps the Federal, state and local governments can take to lessen the severity of natural disasters

- Develop improved partnerships between users and developers
 - ▶ Publicize ongoing and planned research among all entities

- Standardize within risk assessment and management
 - ▶ Terminology and language
 - ▶ Risk assessment methodology and approach for all natural hazards

- Compile available risk assessment tools/models
 - ▶ Designate a clearing house for consistency of information
 - ▶ Leverage existing programs and entities/agencies

- Improve public outreach, education, and training
 - ▶ Include all sectors of society